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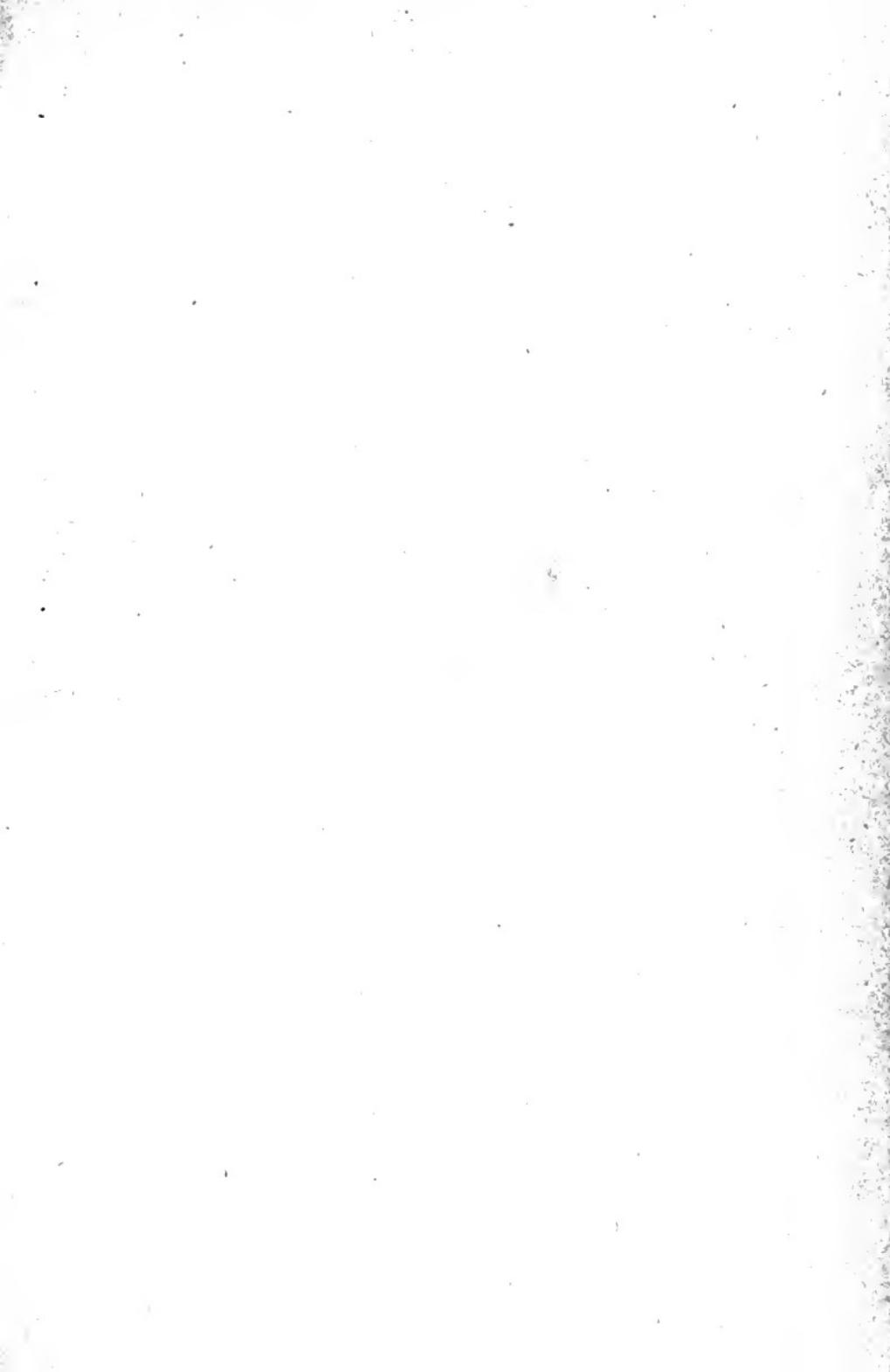


Lux ex Tenebris.

Claus Spreckels Fund.



27





AMBASSADORS OF COMMERCE.

THE SADDLE-BAG MAN.

SS lux
28 Nov 1885

THE
AMBASSADORS
OF
COMMERCE

BY A. P. ALLEN

"
Bradbury, Agnew & Co.

"TRADE IS THE GOLDEN GIRDLE OF THE WORLD."

ILLUSTRATED BY STURGEON



T. FISHER UNWIN

26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1885

HF 5A41
A5

SPRECKELS

DEDICATION.

To the Memory

OF THE LATE

G E O R G E M O O R E ,

AND (BY PERMISSION) TO

THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

OF THE

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SCHOOLS,

AND THE

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' BENEVOLENT

INSTITUTION,

WHO ARE SO DESERVEDLY POPULAR WITH

THEIR BROTHER TRAVELLERS FOR THE NOBLE VOLUNTARY WORK

DONE AND THE GOOD ACHIEVED BY THEIR GENEROUS

AND UNTIRING EFFORTS, AND FOR

THE MAGNIFICENT INSTITUTIONS WHICH THEY HAVE REARED

AND SUSTAINED, CAUSING

THE WIDOW'S HEART TO REJOICE

AFTER THE BREAD-WINNER HAS PASSED AWAY,

AND SOOTHING THE DYING MOMENTS OF

MANY A TRAVELLER WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE LITTLE

ONES WOULD BE CARED FOR BY HIS BRETHREN.

TO THE ABOVE AND TO "ABSENT

FRIENDS" I CORDIALLY

DEDICATE

THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

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PREFACE.

IN this booky age, when the many wish to teach and the few desire to learn, it is necessary in most cases of book writing to make the preface an apology for, as well as an insight into, its contents.

Before Smiles yielded to the wish of Mrs. Moore to write a biography of "George," her late husband, he (Smiles) asked the opinion of a leading City merchant, who replied, "What can you make of the life of a London warehouseman?" A similar question may be asked respecting Commercial Travellers. I do not hope to give so satisfactory a reply as Smiles has done, in the shape of such an excellent biography of so remarkable a man; but being of opinion that the most readable and interesting portion of his book is that which treats of George Moore as a "Commercial Traveller," I venture to presume that if so much of interest can be gleaned from the life of *one* of a class, the fifty thousand to sixty thousand which comprise the whole body should yield sufficient material to reward the general reader for perusing it, and furnish the "ambassadors of com-

merce" with a mirror in which they need not be ashamed to look themselves full in the face. A mirror which will represent and reflect the strongest link in the chain of commerce, which binds in one common brotherhood this our English "nation of shopkeepers."

Having had nearly a quarter of a century's experience of the "Road" and "Rail," I lay claim to have some knowledge of so useful and valuable a body of men, some information to impart, some mistaken ideas of them to rectify, and some hints to give for the benefit of both employer and representative.

I make no claim to merit of a literary character. I am not writing to make money, for if the sale of these pages should have the good fortune to show a profit, "The Commercial Travellers' Schools" and "The Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Institution" will each of them have a moiety of so happy a result; should it be otherwise, I shall ask no one to share in the loss.

My chief object is to place the Traveller in his true position, the one he has a right by merit to occupy in the estimation of the commercial world. In a sentence, to picture him *as he is*, and not as he is often represented to be. More than this they do not require, less than this they have had in the past accorded them.

"An honest tale speeds best being plainly told."—RICH. II.

A. P. ALLEN.

MESSRS. BRADBURY, GREATOREX, & CO.,
5, 6, AND 7, ALDERMANBURY,
LONDON, E.C.



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A DEFINITION.

“They eats, they drinks, they smokes, they sleeps,
and we do all the work.”

A NOTED “BOOTS.”



CHAPTER I.

A Definition.

DEAN TRENCH has said that nothing is harder than a definition, and to define *absolutely* who is and who is not a commercial traveller, is a question which I shall not attempt to decide. It cannot be said that a costermonger is *not* a commercial traveller, for he travels regularly to the market, buys, sells, and gets his precarious living by being constantly on the move in pursuit of commerce. No man can show more skill in driving a bargain or making a sale, and is he not, every inch of him, "a man of the road," and, in one sense at least, also a man of much "railing"?

It would be impossible to produce a more striking contrast to our modest costermonger, with his humble donkey and rickety five-barred gate on two wheels, than the Prince of Wales, who travels in state, heralded by

trumpeters, escorted by the military, and applauded by the multitude, as he wends his way through our great commercial centres and seaport towns, on one day to lay the foundation-stone of a new Town Hall, on another day to open a “New Alexandra Dock;” one year busy representing the English nation at a Paris Exposition, and another year President of a Fisheries Exhibition. I have heard it again and again remarked that H.R.H. has travelled more thousands of miles than any other Englishman, and always, when opportunity offered, doing his utmost to further the great national interest—Commerce ; and yet we cannot designate the Prince a “Commercial Traveller,” a “Bagman,” or a “Drummer.”

The difficulty is to say who can *not*, rather than who can, lay claim to be placed under this title. Charles Dickens himself, who not unfrequently used the commercial room in his wanderings in search of information and study of character, seemed to be puzzled by this very question, so much so that he entitles a book the “Uncommercial Traveller,” and says :

“Allow me to introduce myself—first negatively.

“No landlord is my friend and brother ; no chamber-maid loves me ; no waiter worships me ; no “boots” admires and envies me. No round of beef or tongue or ham is expressly cooked for me ; no pigeon pie is especially made for me ; no hotel advertisement is personally addressed to me ; no hotel room tapestried with great coats and railway wrappers is set apart for me ; no-

house of public entertainment in the United Kingdom greatly cares for my opinion of its brandy or sherry. When I go upon my journeys I am not usually rated at a low figure in the bill; when I come home from my journeys I never get any commission. I know nothing about prices, and should have no idea, if I were put to it, how to wheedle a man into ordering something he does not want. As a town traveller, I am never to be seen driving a vehicle externally like a young and volatile pianoforte van, and internally like an oven in which a number of flat boxes are baking in layers. As a country traveller, I am rarely to be found in a gig, and am never to be encountered by a pleasure train, waiting on the platform of a branch station, quite a Druid in the midst of a light Stonehenge of samples.

“ And yet—proceeding now to introduce myself positively—I am both a town traveller and a country traveller, and am always on the road. Figuratively speaking, I travel for the great house of Human Interest Brothers, and have rather a large connection in the fancy goods way. Literally speaking, I am always wandering here and there from my rooms in Covent Garden, London—now about the city streets, now about the country by-roads—seeing many little things, and some great things, which, because they interest me, I think may interest others.

“ These are my brief credentials as the Uncommercial Traveller.” And yet Dickens says, “ I am both a

country and a town traveller, and am always on the road ;” so that in lieu of having to speak of 50,000 or 60,000 commercial travellers, we should have hundreds of thousands, for every man and woman engaged in business which occasions them to solicit orders outside of their own establishments (no matter how small their order sheets may be), be they hucksters or chimney-sweeps, newspaper boys or match-sellers, *in a sense* they are indisputably commercial travellers. Well, for the reader’s consolation I will say no more respecting these unofficial commercials, for it is not of the militia of the road I wish to speak, but of the *bonâ fide* regular traveller, who has his credentials from mercantile houses of undoubted standing and repute ; men who are in receipt of at least a guinea per diem for expenses, who stay at recognized commercial hotels, and whose children are eligible for election to the Commercial Travellers’ Schools, or themselves to become members of the Commercial Travellers’ Benevolent Institution.

The above is an attempt to define and bring us, as the politician would say, “within measurable distance” of the meaning of the term “Commercial Traveller.”



THEIR NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS AND
CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS.

“That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.”—
KING LEAR.



CHAPTER II.

Their Necessary Qualifications and Chief Characteristics.

THE qualifications necessary for a good traveller are of such an unique character that it is always more difficult to select a man for the road than for any other position in a large mercantile house. It being a popular appointment, and the talent required being so considerably underrated by aspiring applicants, it becomes perplexing to select the right man out of the many who imagine themselves able to fill so important a position.

If a lad has a talent for figures, you can educate him by the slow process of evolution from an entering clerk, through the counting-house, to be chief cashier, and be pretty sure of getting the right man in the right place. You can watch the movements of your apprentices step by step, until they reach the counter, and quickly test their ability as salesmen.

10 *THEIR NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS.*

There are also special qualifications required to make a successful buyer—judgment, enterprise, and discretion, traits which many an excellent salesman does not possess; and yet the difficulty of selection is not so great, for the first salesman, with ordinary ability, has had the opportunity for years (too many in most instances for his own advantage) of watching his buyers' tactics and getting well educated, “posted up,” and fitted for the vacancy when it occurs. None of these opportunities are open to the would-be traveller, for with the exception of a little “binxing” (going round town occasionally for his own department), or a special journey now and then with a country representative, he is an untried man.

This I consider the weakest point in the management of most of the large houses, as the travelling department is rapidly becoming the most important branch. Even old firms, who for many years prided themselves on being able to dispense with travellers, have now, in nearly every instance, succumbed to the high pressure of the times, which has compelled them to send out representatives to do the business which formerly came without solicitation. Notwithstanding that this department, in all “go-ahead” houses, is the pivot on which the bulk of their trade directly and indirectly turns, there is, as I have already remarked, little or no opportunity for a man to secure the experience necessary for so important a position. I am therefore of opinion that it is necessary to apprentice a man for one or two years to a

skilled traveller of long standing, to a man who is known for his knowledge of business, his steady habits, industry, reliability, determined perseverance, and general success.

A young man has in most cases to make his first venture as a traveller as a speculation both for himself and the house—hence the frequent complete failure of many men sent out, and consequent loss of trade to their employers.

Quite recently a partner in one of the largest wholesale London warehouses told me that he wanted a man to cover an important ground, and that out of the two hundred men in their employ, there was not one he could select and with any degree of confidence say, “You will make a traveller, you are fit for the appointment.” And as a further endorsement of what I have advanced, nothing is so satisfactory to men who are established on the road as to hear of a strong opponent having left the ground to be followed by a new and untried man; such a change usually tends to his advantage and to the detriment of his new competitor. This applies to the traveller who changes his employers, for, with few exceptions, men come to grief who leave their first house, if it be a fairly good one. “A rolling stone gathers no moss” is most applicable to the man of the road, for if he be in any degree the right man, he can always command a remuneration that will do away with the necessity of a change, the most successful men being those who have travelled for one firm only.

An ambassador of commerce must of necessity be a *born traveller*, equally with the poet, artist, or musician ; he must take to travelling as naturally as a cygnet to the water, or as a lark to the skies ; and if a man has not this gift, this tact, this genius, and this adaptability, no amount of drilling will ever compensate him for the lack of these necessary qualifications.

It has been said : “The cygnet finds the water, but the man is ignorant of his element and feels out blind at first ;” this is most true, but as a rule it is no fault of the man himself, he being too often cramped in positions of other people’s selection, positions the very opposite to which his tastes and talents would naturally have led him. My impression is that with a proper study of the bias of the minds of children by the parent or teacher, and care in the choice of a suitable business or profession, much trouble and pain might be spared them in after life. A strong case in point is George Moore, who says of himself : “ My employer, Mr. Fisher, said of me, that he had had many a stupid blockhead from Cumberland, but that I was the greatest of them all.” The truth was that George Moore as a warehouseman was confined and cribbed like a caged bird, fretting and beating its wings against the bars of its prison-house with no opportunity of expansion ; but no sooner had “George” secured the freedom to act in a character for which nature had prepared him than his particular abilities as a traveller shone out, rapidly lighting him to the front.

The square boy was now out of the round hole, and he was not long in showing his employer the stuff of which he was made, causing Mr. Fisher entirely to change his opinion of him. Moore was now found to be too good for a town traveller, and in about eighteen months afterwards he was appointed to the Liverpool and Manchester circuit. The youth in the warehouse, upbraided for his stupidity, proved on the road so brilliant a man that Mr. Fisher "became proud of him." George Moore has been called "a genius of the road;" the term genius has been interpreted as "the art of taking pains," which is the chief characteristic of all classes of successful men, but more especially of the ambassador of commerce, for whilst in most positions men are under the immediate eye and control of their employers, the traveller is of necessity left very much to his own resources and idea of what constitutes a fair day's labour. He has perfect freedom as to the hours he may take for work, rest, and pleasure; he has no command to obey but duty, no master to serve but self-respect; if he has added to these the art of taking pains, he is bound to win; if he has all other acquirements and not this, he is as certain to miss the mark, for all the brilliancy, tact, and judgment he may possess will not serve him in place of that indomitable application which is deaf to difficulties, brooks no failure, and fears no amount of labour or opposition.

A real commercial traveller will think much about his business, dream of it, love it, ay! even worship it, con-

sidering no day too long in the prosecution of it. George Moore worked on an average sixteen hours a day, and had little hope of a man who worked less.

Another characteristic of a good traveller is his thorough knowledge of human nature, and ability to adapt himself impromptu to any phase of it. He is a quick and accurate observer of character, and smart in forming business judgments. He can see at a glance the motives and capacities of men, and reads them as men read common print. The fawning sycophant is as soon detected and as much despised by him as the honest, straightforward man is discovered and respected. Knowing human nature so well, he is at once the master of those who do not, and it is in this his superiority lies. Lord Beaconsfield had this trait pre-eminently. In his first novel, "Vivian Grey," he remarks: "Humanity is my game." He made this his great study, and moulded to his own successful purposes that portion of humanity most difficult to move, men with fixed ideas, unbounded wealth, and strong prejudices; said to be the proudest aristocracy the world has ever seen. To conquer and educate this element of humanity was the young Disraeli's highest ambition, and how he succeeded by his tact, judgment, and knowledge of human nature, his determined perseverance amidst mountains of difficulties, showing a buoyancy of spirit under the most humiliating reverses, is now part and parcel of the history of this great empire, and in this respect at least Lord

Beaconsfield is an example to all young men of enterprise and ambition, and to the young commercial traveller in particular. I shall never forget the impression made on myself by those memorable words at the close of Disraeli's maiden speech in the House of Commons: "Ay! sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you *will* hear me." This earnestness of character is not unfrequently mistaken for hardness of soul, ugliness of temper, and utter selfishness, when it is but the outcome of a man with a purpose in life which he is determined to fulfil. He is always active and sanguine, persistently advocating his own interests. He is also a most uncompromising but scrupulous opponent.

I know of no one word which more fully represents the calling of the traveller than the term ambassador, for he is always absent on important business, and his occupation is far away from the seat of government. He must be truly a representative of the opinions and interests of those at home, always remembering that his success and theirs are identical, never playing into the enemy's hands. He may have his general instructions where he is to go, and on whom he is to call, but he must not be burdened with too much "red tape," or the object of his mission will be defeated. He must be a man of originality and strong individuality, perfectly free and untrammelled. A good traveller will always command this freedom of action, for who can be so correct a judge of the requirements of the ground he covers as

himself? A weak man, who has to be dictated to from headquarters, lacks the true spirit of an ambassador, and will prove of no service to himself or his employers. In a sentence, a “commercial” will be respected just in proportion to the respect which he has for himself, and his position will be higher or lower just to the extent that this respect is manifested. A sterling, smart fellow will not require even the “crack of the whip,” for, being a “law unto himself,” he does not need the assistance of any further instructions, for it is usually more necessary to warn him against doing too much than to press him to do more. On the other hand, if he cannot do a trade without a constant urging, he is either unfit for his position, or those superintending at home, having had no experience of the road themselves, being unable to direct, are equally unfit for their positions. A pound of practice, in every walk of life, is worth a ton of theory. I have seen a good average man made totally unfit for his day’s work, every particle of interest and “go” taken out of him, by some stupid remarks in a letter to him by a more than stupid governor, or by a man placed in a false position over him. Unless principals can write letters of sympathy and encouragement to their ambassadors, they had better keep their pens dry, or recall the men who necessitate such attentions. It is a question of *all* or *no* confidence.

If the traveller is “worth his salt,” he will not submit to the slightest dictation; if he is not, no amount of

writing or forcing will ever make him worth even so simple a commodity.

Tact is also a most necessary requirement; circumstances are constantly occurring that will necessitate smart and prompt exercise of the judicial faculty; money is often made or lost, without even time for a reply telegram; the reputation of the house sacrificed and the customer lost, by an injudicious word, or an uncalled-for remark of the representative.

Speaking of tact, there is an amusing story told of an old "commercial" who was determined to do with a very good but very crotchety draper. Calling upon him one day and presenting his card as usual soliciting orders, he met with the anticipated rebuff: "I have nothing to say to you; cannot you take No for an answer?" and he was ordered out of the shop. Two hours afterwards he returns and again accosts his customer by saying, "I have executed your order and have just come in to say good day." "Order!" replied the astonished draper; "I gave you no order!" "Oh yes, you did!" replied the "commercial;" "do you not remember the order to leave your premises?" This so tickled the man that he said, "Well, you are a decent fellow and not easily offended, you can send So-and-so, and So-and-so."

In Smiles' "Life of George Moore," the following is narrated: "Many are the stories still told by commercial travellers about George Moore's determination to get orders. He would not be denied. If refused at first,

he resorted to all sorts of expedients until he succeeded. On one occasion he sold the clothes off his back to get an order. A tenacious draper in a Lancashire town refused to deal with him. The draper was quite satisfied with the firm that supplied him, and he would make no change. This became known among the commercial travellers at the hotel, and one of them made a bet of £5 with George Moore that he would not obtain an order.

"George set out again. The draper saw him entering the shop, and cried out, 'All full ! all full, Mr. Moore ! I told you so before !' 'Never mind,' said George, 'you won't object to a crack.' 'Oh no !' said the draper. They cracked about many things, and then George Moore, calling the draper's attention to a new coat which he wore, asked, 'What he thought of it?' 'It's a capital coat,' said the draper. 'Yes, first-rate ; made in the best style by a first-rate London tailor.' The draper looked at it again, and again admired it. 'Why,' said George, 'you are exactly my size ; it's quite new, I'll sell it you.' 'What's the price?' 'Twenty-five shillings.' 'What ! that's very cheap.' 'Yes, it's a great bargain.' 'Then I'll buy it,' said the draper.

"George went back to his hotel, donned another suit, and sent the 'great bargain' to the draper. George calling again, the draper offered to pay him. 'No, no,' said George, 'I'll book it ; you've opened an account.' Mr. Moore had sold the coat at a loss, but he was re-

couped by the £5 bet which he won, and he obtained an order besides. The draper afterwards became one of his best customers.

"On another occasion a silk mercer at Newcastle-upon-Tyne was called upon many times without any result. He was always 'full.' In fact he had no intention of opening an account with the new firm. Mr. Moore got to know that he was fond of a particular kind of snuff—rappee, with a touch of beggar's brown in it. He provided himself with a box in London, and had it filled with the snuff. When at Newcastle he called upon the silk mercer, but was met as usual with the remark, 'Quite full, quite full, sir.' 'Well,' said Moore, 'I scarcely expected an order, but I called upon you for a reference.' 'Oh, by all means.' In the course of conversation George took out his snuff-box, took a pinch, and put it in his pocket. After a short interval he took it out again, took another pinch, and said, 'I suppose you are not guilty of this bad habit?' 'Sometimes,' said the draper. George handed him the box. He took a pinch with zest, and said, through the snuff, 'Well, that's very fine!' George had him now. He said, 'Let me present you with the box; I have plenty more.' He accepted the box. No order was asked, but the next time George called upon him he got his first order, and the draper long continued to be one of his best customers."

In one of the early numbers of that excellent penny-

worth, "Funny Folks," an illustration is given of a very pressing commercial traveller and an exasperated hosier. The latter said, "Did I not tell you that I had had more travellers than customers, and that I would not look at an article." "Well!" replied the traveller, "you don't mind me having a look at the samples myself, for trade has been so bad, I have not seen them for the last six days."

A personal friend of mine, T. K., once advised a customer, and received the following on a post-card : "'All the world's a stage, and men and women merely players,' but you are not required to perform at W. this time. Kind regards. Yours truly, H."

T. K., a splendid fellow, ordered his conveyance as usual, and drove the ten miles to W., and on pulling up at his customer's door was accosted by a "Halloo! You here! Did you not get my card?" "I did," replied T. K., "but I'm not 'a player,' I am a worker, and want an order;" and he got it too, for not less than fifty pounds' worth of goods.

I mention these instances not so much to cause a laugh as to show the tact and good humour with which a genuine commercial takes his rebuffs, the happy way he has of turning the poisoned arrow, and the smart manner in which he mans his commercial ship, enticing and catching every breath of "the trade winds" into its sails, so that his boat may bound gaily over the troubled waters, and enter the port of success.

A man physically weak cannot make a successful traveller. A robust constitution is most necessary, a healthy son of healthy parents very requisite. The mind and the body being so closely connected, a pure and natural flow of blood to feed the brain is of great importance to clear thinking and correct action.

This is necessary to any ordinary man of business, and is indispensable to the “commercial” who has to go out and *make* a trade. I use the word *make* advisedly, for more than fifty per cent. of the orders have to be made, not by the buyer, who is seldom in want of anything, but by the seller, who has to create the want before he supplies it. A man with a sickly dyspeptic body too often takes “No” for an answer, and thus fails where a man of stronger physique succeeds. Most of the healthiest and best men are recruited from the provinces, thus bringing into the market a constant supply of fresh blood, strong bodies, and clear brains. There is a marked difference between the town and the country bred youth. Smiles gives the best description of this contrast that I have ever read; he says, “Country-bred boys are slow; whilst town-bred boys are quick. Time is of little consequence in the village; whilst time is of every consequence in the city. In the country you may saunter along half asleep; whereas in the town you must push along wide-awake. You see the rapidity of London life in the streets, where everybody is walking with rapidity, bent on some purpose or another.”

"It is the same in places of business. Everything is concentrated into a few working hours. During that time everybody is working at the top of his bent. Hence the rapid movements of the town-bred lad. He may be shallow and frivolous ; he may know next to nothing out of his own groove ; but he must be sharp, smart, and clever. The city boy scarcely grows up : he is rushed up. He lives amid a constant succession of excitements, one obliterating another. In fact, his reflective powers have scarcely time to grow and expand.

"It is very different with the country boy. He is much slower in arriving at his maturity than the town boy ; but he is greater when he reaches it. He is hard and unpolished at first ; whereas the town boy is worn smooth by perpetual friction, like the pebbles in a running stream. The country boy learns a great deal, though he may seem to be unlearned. He knows a great deal about nature, and a great deal about men. He has had time to grow. His brain-power is held in reserve.

"Hence the curious fact that, in course of time, the country-bred boy passes the city-bred boy, and rises to the highest positions in London life. Look at all the great firms, and you will find that the greater number of the leading partners are those who originally were country-bred boys."

I may add that this endurance or staying power will always tell in favour of its fortunate possessor ; it will be

an illustration of the old fable of the hare and the tortoise ; the town-bred man will be the swifter, but as “ the race is not always to the swift,” the steady, plodding, strong-framed village lad usually succeeds. Hence we see no Frenchmen in our warehouses, and but few Irish—those we have come from the north of Ireland, with a strong admixture of Scotch blood in their veins. Scotchmen themselves are very numerous, and not unfrequently hold positions of considerable importance and trust. They are not brilliant, but are blessed with a splendid physique and that dogged perseverance which never fails of success. I may also instance the same qualities in the Germans, who so often outstrip our own youths in the race.

I am not an alarmist, and fear nothing of the future of true Britons, but I warn the careless and indifferent manufacturers, warehousemen, and travellers that royalty is not the only portion of the inhabitants of this island tinctured with German blood and power, but that London, Manchester, and all our large towns, are thronged with enterprising young Germans, who are powerful competitors in business.

There are two reasons for this. Their military precautions are so urgent and exacting that life becomes a burden to them at home. Hence Germany sends more emigrants annually to the United States than any other country, and great numbers come here from the same cause. The other reason why they are such strong



competitors is that they are so frugal and so extremely economical that we cannot hold our own with them, if they be on equal terms with us in other respects. It is a marvel to us how they keep up their vigorous constitutions on bouillon, sauer kraut, and lager beer ; from whatever cause, they are opponents not to be despised, and our young warehousemen will lose nothing by keeping a watchful eye on their Teutonic cousins, the Germans.

Mentally, the commercial traveller must be above the average of intelligent beings. He must be well posted up in the news of the day, ready to answer any question, and give a rational opinion on current topics. He often has to give an opinion without much thought, but from habit he is quick in making up his mind, and from experience is not often wrong in his decision ; but he is somewhat bombastic in manner and most pronounced in his assertions. This comes from an over-development of self-reliance and strong individuality, so necessary to him in his daily occupation. This is a well-known trait of the ambassador of commerce, and not a few carry it even into their homes and the minutiae of life.

As a rule he is not intellectual ; the little he does know he has a very happy way of spinning out and using to the best advantage. He is somewhat pretentious and overbearing in his conversation, but during the last few years he has considerably improved in this respect.

There are a few “bookworms” in their ranks, and a few men who have a smattering of scientific knowledge, or who know something of the history of their own country; but they are the exception to the rule. The ordinary “commercial” has a very superficial knowledge of literature, and only knows Darwin as the man who said “we came from the ape, and once had a tail;” “that Queen Anne is dead;” that “‘a man is a man for a’ that,’ as Shakespeare says in his *Paradise Lost*:” but they are great on wine and good living, and can tell you where the best glass of good old port or fine madeira (which to their certain knowledge has been twice round the Cape) can be had, and also what hotel proprietor gives the best spread on a Sunday.

As a politician, his tendency has generally been of a conservative character; this, too, is to be accounted for by the fighting qualities which are developed by his having hourly to hold his own against the forces of his competitors in trade. This was most notable throughout the Russo-Turkish war, and more recently during the Egyptian difficulty; “Never say die” and “Nil desperandum” being his chief mottoes.

The successful traveller is also conservative for another reason, precisely the same for which an enlightened Scotchman turned his political coat in 1880. When asked why he, being a Liberal, had voted Tory, replied that he had “got a coo now.” I have known others than Scotchmen become less Radical after having made a

few thousand pounds, and am inclined to think from such cases that the interpretation of the term "democrat," viz., "a would-be aristocrat," is not so far off the mark.

The "commercial" is strong as a politician, and I wish this to be understood in no mean or narrow sense, for I have again and again heard discussions of a political character carried on in the commercial room until the small hours, with no inconsiderable ability, and with much sound information, historical knowledge, and logical acumen. We have commercial travellers members of the House of Commons to-day, others who have written political pamphlets of no mean order, and a host of men who are chairmen of political clubs and other organizations, men who can speak well at public meetings and influence the popular vote to a large extent. I am also acquainted with several sterling men who would be an acquisition to so intelligent an assembly, as the trading interests of this great empire are inadequately represented by the members of the present House of Commons.

The late M. Gambetta's idea of pressing into the service as independent electioneering agents the important and powerful corporation of commercial travellers shows considerable political sagacity. It is a fact not generally known that these travellers possess great political influence ; and all the more effectual is their support of any party that, not being professed politicians, and

not being therefore personally interested in the results of an electioneering campaign, their advice and recommendations are viewed without distrust by the provincial folks among whom they follow their professional avocations. The side taken up by them is, as a rule, the side that is likely to win. Under the Restoration it was they who kept alive the curious combination of Bonapartism and Liberalism which culminated in the revolution of July. Their quiet but effectual action had much to do in creating that state of public opinion which led to the revolution of 1848, and the subsequent resuscitation of the Empire. At a dinner to French commercial travellers, over which he presided some little time ago, M. Gambetta graphically described how signally they had contributed to the defeat of May 16th.

It is generally admitted that a traveller will do a larger trade with men of his own nationality than a stranger will ; that is to say, in Scotland, Ireland, or Wales an Englishman is seldom so successful, although he may have more ability. It is equally the case in the different parts of England. A traveller will almost always do more business in the neighbourhood and with the people he knows most about ; this is obvious for several reasons. He understands the character of his customers, and the class of goods which will best suit the locality ; he is acquainted with their tastes, peculiarities, and prejudices. He can crack provincial jokes in their own *patois*. He has probably been a schoolmate of one client, and may

have been apprenticed with another, and has lived as a salesman with some one else. He has, perhaps, married the daughter of Mr. G., who is related to or friendly with Mr. H., another customer; this is all natural, pleasant, and means business. It always was and will be so as long as humanity is made of similar materials. I see nothing objectionable in this. "Blood is thicker than water," and anything which promotes friendship and good feeling, and adds to the "rosiness" of life and a traveller's order-book should be encouraged. We find the same sentiment manifested by many employers. A Devonshire or a Cumberland principal cannot help being biassed in favour of men from his native county. I have heard it remarked that "It's no use applying at So-and-so's for a berth, as there is no chance for any but Cumberland men."



AS SALESMEN.

HINTS TO YOUNG TRAVELLERS.

“Fail—Fail? In the lexicon of youth, which fate reserves for a bright manhood, there is no such word as fail!”—BULWER'S “RICHELIEU.”

“Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits.”
“TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.”



CHAPTER III.

As Salesmen.

HINTS TO YOUNG TRAVELLERS.

THIS book would be incomplete were I to omit the most necessary trait in the composition of a “commercial,” namely, his ability as a salesman ; for a traveller without this gift would be as useless as a rifle without powder and shot, or a locomotive minus its steam. Apropos to this point :—A gentleman at the head of one of the largest City houses was once at Folkestone on pleasure, and thought he might mingle a little business with it, or at least shake hands with a customer or two, thanking them for their past support, &c. With this idea he called upon a draper, who was very busy dressing his window and did not wish to be disturbed. The gentleman in question having waited for some time, and no notice being taken of him, at last went up to the proprietor and said, “ My name is So-and-so ! ” “ Oh !

indeed!" was the curt reply. "It's a fine morning!" said the City man. No answer. He waited some few minutes longer and again repeated the salutation in rather a louder voice, "It's a fine morning, Sir." "I think I heard you say that before!" This was so crushing that he quietly walked out of the shop, and in his inmost heart resolved that he would never call upon a customer again, feeling that whatever ability he might possess, tackling a customer was evidently not his forte. Those who have never solicited orders have little conception of the courage required to overcome the difficulties and obstacles that hedge a traveller in on all sides. Men who only sit at home and daily open two or three hundred post orders and a score or more of order sheets from their representatives have but a faint idea of what each order represents in toil of brain and body. They have not the remotest conception of the amount of tact, perseverance, and ingenuity required to secure each morning's result. So little did the senior partner of the firm I first represented understand travelling, that he innocently said to me as I was about to start on my maiden journey, "You will only have to show them our card, Sir, and they will give you their orders." I have often wondered where I or the business of the firm would now have been if others with myself had acted upon such ignorant advice. I consider that the true art of selling is to be able to push the trade without permitting your customer to feel that you are forcing goods upon him. To bore

your friends is "bad form," and buyers avoid this class of salesman, and to him are often "not at home." The old proverb, "Speech is silvern but silence is golden," is worth remembering even when selling a parcel, for when your man is nibbling, give him line, bide your time, and you will ultimately land him.

A mumbler or a stammerer will get laughed at ; therefore it is important to be able to express one's self in suitable language, and the plainer the better.

Cheerfulness is most requisite in a salesman—cheerfulness even to joviality—and to make your friends equally happy should be your first object.

It has been said that Englishmen are ruled more by custom and sentiment than by law. In business one of the commonest remarks you hear made by buyers is that "So-and-so is a decent fellow, but there is no friendship in business ;" by which it is not meant that business people have no business friends, but that friendship does not influence them in their judgment or their purchases. Notwithstanding this determination, how few there are who are not thus influenced ! How often do these very men say, "Mr. Genial is advised. I don't know of a line that we are wanting ; but he is a capital fellow, and we won't send him away without an order of some sort." Or, "Mr. Bombast has called, Sir ! he will look in again at two o'clock." "Tell him I am out," replies the same man who is never influenced by friendship ; the two travellers mentioned being from equally good houses.

Every traveller is also aware that a similar sentiment and custom applies to old houses of repute, which have a prestige and a position that necessarily commands a certain amount of respect and of trade, and how difficult it is for young houses to remove this prejudice. They are constantly confronted with the remark, "I like the old firm. My father did with them before I was born ; they have always used me fairly well. I know the buyers, and they know me and my ways, and so long as they continue to use me fairly well I shall not think of changing." And yet there is no friendship in business. The young traveller who does not take this important fact into full consideration will quickly find men who represent smaller growing houses who do make friends of their customers, gradually supplanting him, and finally shutting him out altogether. A thoughtful man is pleased that it is so ; for to be a mere money-grubber, grinding away from January to Christmas for the sake of being able to say, "I have increased my return so much this year ; I have made so much money, and shall die worth such and such an amount"—this is deplorable and degrading. He becomes less than a man, a mere machine, a sordid soulless churl. I must, however, sound a note of warning here. I do not wish it to be understood that sentiment or friendship is everything, and that the value of goods, especially in these days of hot competition, is nothing or of little importance, for it would be as suicidal to depend entirely on one as on the other of these commercial

essentials. For during the last ten years it has been most patent that many of the old houses who have trusted to their historic prestige *only* are now defunct, while others are in a weak, consumptive condition from the same cause. To ensure, therefore, constant growth and complete success, the traveller must start with goods on equal terms with his competitors. If, in addition, he combines the happy knack of making friends and looking them well up, he need not fear for the results.

When addressing a customer it is bad policy to commence by saying : “*Nothing* in the linen department ?” “*Nothing* in fruits ?” but always address him in the affirmative : “You *want* a number in brown hollands,” or, “This is a cheap line in rice.” You want to entice your customer into a “Yes,” and not into a “No.” I remember that on many an occasion when I have suggested that a roll or two of crape at a certain price was wanted, I have been asked by my customer, “Who has told you that we were out of crapes at that price ?” “Oh, no one, I assure you !” was my reply. “I simply drew the bow at a venture, it being a price of which I know you sell a large quantity.” To an experienced salesman these remarks will appear unnecessary ; but it will do no harm to remind older salesmen that it is an easy matter to fall into a slovenly way of addressing a customer when introducing goods.

A thorough knowledge of the goods you are offering will gain you the confidence of your clients ; indeed,

unless you are *better* acquainted than the buyer with the character of the article you are showing, you at once lose caste and are discounted by him, thus failing to make either an impression or a sale.

Implicit confidence in the veracity of a salesman is of supreme importance. Misrepresentation of goods under any circumstances is to be deprecated, and any exaggeration of the value is the worst policy. "Honesty is the best policy," not only for a lifetime, but also for each moment of it; not only for a large transaction, but also for the most modest. "Shaving a customer" is not only most injudicious in a salesman, but it is fatal to all confidence and self-respect; and it finally leads to an empty order-book and a lost situation.

There is an amusing story told of a Quaker and a smart young fellow whom he had engaged from St. Paul's Churchyard for his shawl department. A few hours after his engagement a customer asked for a "Paisley long." After giving the salesman a great deal of trouble, and having inspected every shawl in the stock, she was about to leave unsuited (no shawl that she had seen being good enough), when the young man who wished to show his ability, not liking the first day to receive "a swop," said, "You will pardon me, madam, but I had forgotten that we have a case just in from Scotland. If you can wait a minute or two I think I can please you." She sat down again. In the meantime he hurriedly cleared the counter, taking upstairs with him several of the

shawls he had shown her. He refolded and re-marked them, and returned with the very same shawls, all marked a guinea higher in price. The lady again inspected them, and purchased one at four guineas, the price she had made up her mind to give; being no judge of the real value of the article, like many foolish persons who argue with themselves: "I ought to get a decent dress for so much, and nothing is good enough that doesn't cost that amount," thus exposing themselves to the process of what is termed in the trade being "shaved." But to my story. The Quaker, who had been nervously watching the whole proceedings, remarked to the salesman that he did not allow his assistants to make two prices. "Indeed!" said the young man; "I thought you engaged me to sell your goods?" "Yes," replied the Quaker, "but at the prices marked." "Well," said the young man, "I think I can satisfy your scruples on the point. Anyway, I can quote Scripture for what I have done." "If thou canst," said the Quaker, "I and thee will be friends. What hast thou to say?" "She was a stranger and I took her in." His employer pocketed the extra guinea and said no more.

I am inclined to think that the effect of a smart salesman on a buyer is somewhat mesmeric in character; that animal magnetism, power of mind over mind, or influence of mind over mere [matter, may be all at work, and may be much greater factors in effecting a sale than is generally acknowledged or even dreamed of.

Those who have read "Philochristus" will better understand what is meant by mesmeric force; it is not of necessity a noisy or pronounced power, for it more often than otherwise comes and goes without observation. You call, for instance, upon a man on a cold, dismal November day, when his shop is empty of customers. He wants nothing, and if he did require anything, trade is so indifferent that he would order nothing; and, to add to your discomfiture, he is at this moment marking off goods purchased of yourself last journey, and he has one or two complaints to make of the dilatory manner in which the goods have been delivered, and is quite sure that he did not order certain patterns, and then has a bone to pick with your people respecting some new arrangement of not charging empty boxes on invoices. This is no uncommon case; in fact it is so common that one is quite accustomed to hear a series of complaints every journey, to which a good traveller will listen patiently before introducing his samples. As soon as the storm in the teapot is over, and the lull comes, he says: "Well, trade is a little dull," and tries to divert the mind of his customer to some brighter picture on the horizon; and if there be no such horizon or picture, he must create the one and paint the other. A good salesman must be in this respect an artist—or at least a word or scene painter—adapting himself to his man. Of each individual he must make a separate study. He cracks his joke with one, and is seriously disposed

with another. Under all circumstances a buyer must be put into good humour. When you have converted the frown into a smile, and the hard tone into a genial mood, your commercial iron is hot, your novelty is on the counter (never go in without your tools), and you now strike, and are certain to elicit some sparks of approval. "Yes ; that is something new ! " "This is likely to sell." "What do you think of this now ? " addressing the head of the department (with whom you are, of course, always on excellent terms). He agrees with the principal, and the line in question is booked. The thin end of the wedge is in, the ice is broken ; a few more happy strokes, a few more novelties shown, a decent order is taken, and all is pleasant and agreeable. The man who had turned several travellers away this morning without a line, and had, in fact, probably snubbed most of them ; the man who would not buy an article of any one, "not even if it were given him," this man has become your fast friend, and to him you have been of infinite service. The buyer you found miserable and morose, you have made him agreeable and happy, having put money into his purse by selling him a cheap parcel. Now the question arises, Why did you succeed, and why did those who called previously go empty away ? It has occurred again and again ; you do not quite understand it, and for the life of you could not give a rational explanation of so palpable a fact. The proverb runs : "The biggest fools have the best luck." Don't believe a word of it.

It is simply reaping the harvest which wisdom has sown, for men nowadays, as of yore, do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. I am of opinion that if we knew as much of metaphysical as we do of physical laws, we should find that they are as certain in their order and exactness ; and those who are regardless of the working of these laws will in all probability end their career in mental failure and moral and commercial bankruptcy.

“ Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” is a quotation the sense of which can be applied to so poor a subject as the commercial salesman, and the traveller who rushes in with one stereotyped phrase, “ Good morning, sir ; is there anything in my way to-day ? ” or, “ Will you look at my patterns ? ” when, taking “ No ” for an answer, he need not wonder that he has no harvest to reap.

I have now said enough to show what I mean by the mesmeric power, and the difference between the clear-brained genial man of tact and judgment who hourly succeeds, and the weak, pessimistic, dyspeptic soul who goes moaning through life without a ray of hope, miserable himself, and beclouding the sunshine of every one else. A man fuddled and muddled always fails. We have said that a representative salesman wins the respect and confidence of his customer by strict integrity, being as “ straight as a line,” and that he has this fine, subtle, electric influence over all his customers ; always cheerful and hopeful, and taking an optimistic view of life. He

considers that "if life is to be worth living, it must depend very much upon the liver;" and withal this power which he displays is never obtrusive nor ostentatious, the person influenced being for the most part unconscious of the influence. We see the antithesis of all this in the pronounced salesman, who by brute force, tall talk, brag, and exaggeration—"all his ducks being geese, and his geese swans"—pounces upon the unwary, frightens some into ordering, cajoles others, and ruins many by compelling them almost to buy more goods than they can pay for. These men are well known on the road, and are most useful to their wide-awake competitors, who permit these "Big uns" to get "well in" with risky accounts that they are anxious to "get out" of. They were originally known as "pluggers," because they "plugged" their customers with too many goods. George Moore was not free from this egregious blundering, for it is written of him "that he plugged them so much that the next journey, and for some time to come, the drapers could not buy anything;" and we may add, what was most probable, that many of them could not pay for what they had previously purchased.

I have always found it better policy and safer trading to *under-state* rather than to *over-state*, to advise moderate rather than lavish purchases to your client. Any suggestion that he should not buy such-and-such a line which is not going very well, or that he should have only half the quantity of another which he particularly fancied

would bind the buyer and seller together in a bond that no competition could sunder. A buyer will never forgive you for having forced more goods upon him than his trading requires or his capital warrants ; and piles of goods staring you in the face journey after journey militate against future business. You imagine at the time that you have done a smart thing and may argue that he ought to be the better judge of his requirements, and that you cannot be buyer and seller too ; which remarks I have heard again and again, and have as often condemned. They have always been made by those who lack tact, genuine foresight, and true commercial genius. For it is not what you can sell a man *one* journey, but what you can sell him for his interest *every* journey all the year round that is of importance. Just as the interest of the firm you represent is yours, so should the welfare of your customers be yours also ; any divergence from this straight line of conduct bringing in time its own condemnation in the loss of trade, and finally in the loss of your customer. So in this sense you are buyer and seller too ; *i.e.*, you should be able to gauge the wants of your friends both with regard to the quality and quantity of goods they can do with. This must be one of your principal studies if you wish to become more than a mere selling-machine, singing but one song to all alike. In lieu of this you must be versatile, adapting yourself and your goods to the varied natures and wants of those with whom you come in contact. If it were

necessary to be "all things to all men" 1800 years ago for their moral well-being, it is necessary to be all this and more in the nineteenth century for their commercial prosperity. If it were necessary then to be as wise as one Serpent and as harmless as one Dove that you might be of service to humanity, it is necessary nowadays to have the wisdom of half a dozen of those reptiles and the harmlessness of at least a dozen Hurlingham pigeons. As there are no two blades of grass, no two leaves on a tree, exactly alike, as there are no two human faces quite similar, so the divergence of different minds and characters is even greater; and as I have said in a previous chapter, a thorough knowledge of human nature is most essential. You may have a score or more customers in a town, no two of whom can be approached in the same manner or treated in a similar way. One must be met with humour, another with the mere platitudes of business; one will never buy until you have called three or four times, another will "tick you off" smartly, look at anything you may have to show, and his Yes or No will be final. You may always expect from the latter a courteous reception, an uniform attention, and a respect for your time which should beget a similar attitude on your part. I am of opinion that as good masters make good servants, so good travellers will make good customers and will command proper attention if they only have the essential skill. This is patent to any one who has had any experience on the road. The

traveller who is known to be easy-going, not to say indolent, who generally takes double the time in a town needful to do his business, who has no individuality of character, no weight with his customers, no energy—such an one is without influence, or has not enough to command attention leading to respectful treatment and ending in satisfactory results. This kind of man is great only in writing long letters of complaints of trade, of the weather, of “sellings off,” and of “literally nothing to do in the retail.” The buyers never buy the right thing for his ground, and in the choice of style and pattern are absolutely without taste. Every other house has closer prices. Then there’s “that bear of a counting-house official,” who won’t send the parcel he has sold to a man who can get any amount of credit from certain Scotch houses. And then the unsuccessful man mutters on, “Ah! travelling is not what it used to be. I’ve had enough of it,” &c. Is it surprising that a salesman who has this idea of his house—the firm, the buyers, the goods, the counting-house, and business in general—should fail either to secure orders or to make any impression but a bad one on those on whom he has to call? Whereas a smart man of business, with a fund of mother wit and sound common-sense, brightens everything he touches and cheers every one he meets. He always has free entrance to his customer’s heart, and through that to his order-book. He argues thus: “Trade is fairly good, might be better, nothing to grumble at, one must

be thankful for small mercies. If there are no big orders, one must go in for a multiplicity of small things. And there is always at least a "small line per Sutton and Co.," which this class of man makes by gentle suasion and good temper rather too large for Sutton and Co. and big enough for "Lug. rail." He usually hears from his customer at the close, "There you are again! I cannot understand how it is, but you generally wheedle me into an order; and do you know that the last parcel I bought of you a month ago ran into three figures?" "Yes," replies the confidential salesman, "and the more you do with me the more money you will make. Isn't your present success in the main due to your having had so much cheap stuff of me? Have I ever deceived you? Have you ever done badly with the goods I have recommended?" "No, I have not," replies the satisfied customer; "there is a great deal of truth in what you say, and it is twenty-two years ago this very month since I bought my opening parcel of you." My friend will, I trust, be able to read between the lines and note the real secret of a successful salesman; and will see that it is the quiet, unostentatious power which wins popularity and unconsciously creates business. This type of salesman, I may add, has "educated his connexion" (in the same manner that Disraeli "educated his party") to believe in him and in what he has to sell.

A weak salesman is always quoting what other houses can do, forgetting that they do not pay him his salary

and expenses (not that he should be oblivious of any move of his rivals); but a good salesman has faith in himself, in his firm, and in the goods he has to sell. These are the cardinal points always present to his mind. He does not display an undue, inflated, bombastic, self-sufficiency, but he has a steady, firm, and reasonable satisfaction that no other house can buy or pay better, that other houses than his own have to pay expenses and to make a profit, and that no one house has a monopoly of either money or talent. The idea that, taking his firm all in all, they are not to be beaten, should be sufficient inspiration for himself, and this idea he is bound to impart to every buyer he meets. He is travelling for their interest as well as his own ; this he believes, and he makes them believe it too. There is thus an identity of motive, an intelligent understanding, a mutual confidence between buyer and salesman, which commands constant and increased business.



THE COMMERCIAL ROOM.

“When I was at home I was in a better place ;
but travellers must be content.”

“AS YOU LIKE IT,” Act 2. Sc. 4.



CHAPTER IV.

The Commercial Room.

THE commercial room is usually the most cosy room in the hotel, the landlord knowing full well that no class of his visitors will repay him more readily for any extra outlay than his commercial friends. There was a time when the traveller used to think a great deal more of the landlord's interests than of his own ; but competition, as we shall presently see, has changed all this, as it has changed many other phases of commercial life. When I first travelled I was a driver, and after a hard day's work and a long drive, next to your own home, no more pleasant sight could greet one's eye than the commercial room with its cheerful fire and more cheerful faces, always ready to welcome you warmly, be you friend or stranger, so long as you carry the indispensable credentials of a commercial traveller—an order-book, a writing-

case, and a “Good evening, gentlemen,” as you enter the room. But woe to the *un-commercial* traveller, who is quickly known (as militiamen are known from the regulars) by his gait, uneasy appearance, and general awkwardness. He is quickly relegated to the icy coldness, stiff formalities, and higher tariff of the coffee-room. The cosiness and comfort of the commercial room in the old-fashioned hotel are by no means due to its architectural form, its size, ventilation, or adaptation to its special purposes—most of them having none of these requisites—but to its associations, to the jolly fellows one has met so many times, and to the general desire to make each other as happy as possible without any written rules, regulations, badges, or pass-words. In the commercial room there is perfect liberty without license, absolute order without the slightest show of force ; there is a kind of freemasonry handed down by the saddle-bagmen to the drivers, and from them to the men on the rail. In this way the commercial travellers of Great Britain have insured to them most of the comforts of a good club-house, without its stilted stiffness and cold formality.

Amongst the many false words spoken of commercial men, I note the following true ones by Mark Tapley :

“Among the commercials themselves there are wide divergences of characteristics ; there necessarily must be such. Some members of the body shiver and shudder at the freedom of conversation sometimes carried on in the commercial room over grog and pipe of an evening,

after the labours of the day have ceased—men who have no appreciation of humour or wit—to whom the humour of a Sheridan, a Curran, Theodore Hook, Thomas Hood, or the well-known anecdotes of Dr. Abernethy and others, are as a foreign tongue, and associated with distasteful ideas and misunderstood lives. As in the outer world, so in the inner and smaller world of the commercial room, we have representatives of narrow theological views, and well-meant but misplaced judgment of the acts and doings of those around them. If an individual does not smoke, there is no necessity for his giving statistics to prove that three hundred cigars would pay the premium for a good life policy of insurance against death, though no one denies the utility of life insurance. The total abstainer—a good man, and often doing a great work of good—need not be a bore in the commercial room. Then we have our friends the collectors, who always have collecting cards for cases of need—a chapel restoration, or school treat, a new church in a barren and outcast district—who, having given their ten pounds or half-crown, believe they have a license to agitate all round. In some cases I have known much good done this way, especially by the friends who are agitating for libraries in commercial rooms; but I must give a caution to some, as they invariably remind me of Charles Dickens's turnpike-holders—men who had been soured in life, and took to collecting tolls in gratification of their revengeful feelings against society—reminding one

forcibly that a bore is a bore, whatever subject he bores one upon."

The room itself is not hung with choice works of art in either oil or water colours. The proprietor being more desirous of advertising noted whiskeys and popular bitter ales, he covers the walls with framed advertisements of these beverages. These, with a coloured print of the Commercial Travellers' Schools at Pinner, and a notice of the dinner-hour, complete the pictures. Add to the same a dozen or more half-dried overcoats, mackintoshes, whips, rugs, hats of all conceivable shapes, and you have some idea of the ornamentation and fine art decoration of an old-fashioned commercial room. The furniture consists of the indispensable dining-table, three or four small writing-tables with the usual writing utensils, directories, railway time-tables, &c., a dozen old hair-bottom chairs on which you can scarcely keep your seat, a creaking sofa, and the most uneasy of easy-chairs. Bags, portmanteaus, and leather sample-cases often occupy one end of the same room. These, with sundry cold joints on the side-table and other hot ones being disposed of, will furnish some slight idea of hundreds of commercial rooms with their "sights of smells." The modern hotels give you much better accommodation, such as large, well-lighted, well-ventilated, lofty rooms, a separate writing-room, a special room for luggage, electric bells, and a large lavatory on the ground floor. A great number of these hotels belong to companies, many of

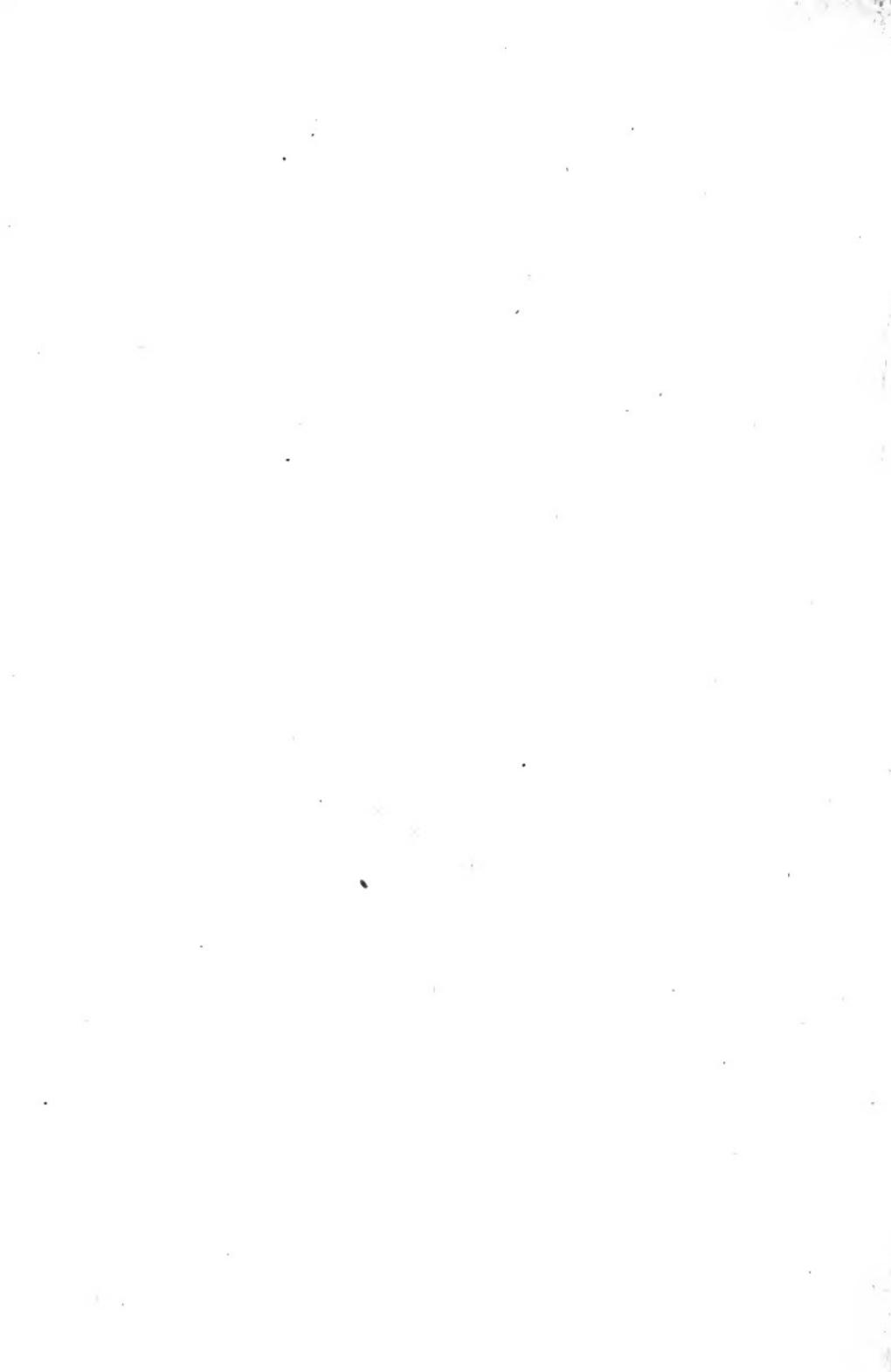
them to the railways ; and they do a thriving business. I have often suggested the desirability of travellers uniting and working out a scheme that would give them a good club-house of their own in every town of 50,000 inhabitants. It would be a daily saving of money and a profitable investment to boot. But the answer has always been that nobody having any time at his disposal, there is little chance of a meeting for a common object. However, whilst I am penning these lines the post brings me a prospectus entitled “The Commercial Travellers’ Clubs (Limited).” But notwithstanding all these advantages, the commercial traveller is very conservative, and so long as he is well used will not change. For there remains in the old hostelries the poetry of associations so dear to the bagman ; and it is not uncommon to hear men speak of having stayed at certain hotels for twenty, thirty, and forty years. Even the low ceiling, badly ventilated bedrooms, with the old four-posters with their giraffe marine hangings, the feather-beds a century old, are not without their charms for some old stagers. There would be in many of these rooms absolutely no ventilation were it not that the thresholds of the doors were so well worn that the air freely entered. And it seems almost incredible that our forefathers and foremothers were so ignorant of the laws of health that the little ventilation from the fireplace was prevented by a bag of straw being poked up the chimney ; and to make doubly sure that no air should enter, a board is

made to fit the fireplace, which is in its turn covered over with a paper of the same pattern as that on the walls of the bedroom. I have slept in rooms where the old servants did not remember ever having seen the window open; and in many instances the attempt dare not be made, since it is doubtful if they could have been closed again. Add to all this a floor of cement, and you will have some conception of what was called a well-appointed hotel. I may say here that until the last few years the tariff for beds was one shilling, a very low price, supposed to be made up to the proprietor by the drinking of sundry grogs during the evening. In the same way the dinners were charged two shillings, in consideration of your being compelled to drink a pint of wine at half-a-crown (of uncertain value). The drivers, on the same principle, were not charged anything for their beds save the chambermaid's sixpence; but in lieu of this they paid for ten times as much hay as any horse could have eaten. The usual practice was to give the first comer No. 1, and so on consecutively; a rule of which no one complained, excepting a few old fogies who would have their favourite room. Others trusted to being on good terms with the chambermaid, and a silver key readily opened the best room to its holder.

The bedrooms in the modern hotels are an enormous improvement on those just described. They are large, lofty, well ventilated and well lighted; delicately papered walls, good spring mattresses on brass-headed iron bed-

steads, hung with snowy white dimity curtains, and with similar counterpanes. A room of this description is a most desirable luxury. But however luxurious our hotels may become, all true men will have to admit that being *at home* "is a better place ; but travellers must be content."





THE COMMERCIAL DINNER.

“ Let me not stay a jot for dinner ;
Go, get it ready.”

“ KING LEAR.”

“ That all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell.”

BYRON.



CHAPTER V.

The Commercial Dinner.

LIFE on the road, however beset with difficulty, brings at least one pleasant hour each day—the midday meal—noted for its sumptuousness and good fellowship. The landlord spares no pains in securing all the delicacies of the season; and his guests being equally prepared with a good appetite, do justice to his endeavours. A mutual compact is thus daily arranged, and the happiness of the greatest number is attained. For whatever remark may be made detrimental to the traveller's appetite for his breakfast, not the remotest hint of the kind can be given regarding his appetency for his dinner. His four hours' prior laborious work, walking at a brisk rate and talking at a brisker, has brought most of his muscles into play; and force has gone off which must be recuperated. Everything a

traveller touches is with intensity of motion ; and, like a steam-engine, he must have a plentiful and constant supply of good fuel, or the machinery will soon get out of gear. "Boxing Harry" is poor economy, but now and again necessary to give the digestive organs a much-needed rest. For medical men have in their nomenclature what is called "a traveller's tongue," resembling, I am told, the furred interior of a much-used kettle. But I am disposed to think that too free a use of alcoholic drink has been its cause rather than the food. The late Mr. Bass would have probably not agreed with me ; for he has the credit of having said that "more men die from over-eating than from over-drinking." Perhaps he is right. We are too apt to rate the one higher than the other because deaths from drinking are so much more patent and pronounced. Under either circumstance the commercial traveller need pray, "Now good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both." It has been well said that the "proof of the pudding is in the eating ;" but we may improve on that, and say that the proof of its being good and beneficial is that it is easily digested. I once quoted the old adage that "a man was either a fool or a physician at forty." "Do you really believe this ?" replied my friend. "Most decidedly." "Well," said he ; "one thing we do know—that you are not a physician."

Much has justly been said against the partaking of a heavy meal in the middle of the day ; and most

men are in favour of the custom in Scotch towns of dinner at five or six o'clock after the day's business. But in most English towns the principals dine from one till two, and the traveller finds it convenient to do the same. If he is a smart fellow, and the gods have been fairly propitious, he will have done at least three-fourths of his day's work by the dinner-hour. Such being the case he is in his happiest mood ; if the reverse, he quotes, “ ‘Tis not in mortals to command success,” &c., and enjoys his dinner, hoping and working for better luck in the afternoon. I once ventured to remark (at our firm's dinner-table) that I occasionally forgot dinner-time when booking a good parcel ; but that when trade was bad I always dined to keep up my spirits. The chief cashier very smartly replied that judging from my order-sheets I had not missed many dinners.

But the dinner is ready, the soup is in. Who is the president ? inquire two or three hungry souls of the waiter. (In the chapter on Etiquette, &c., I have mentioned how the president and Vice are selected.) “ Mr. Buncombe, here he is ! ” “ Will you take a little soup, Mr. Vice ? Mock turtle.” “ Thank you, Mr. President, help our friends.” “ A good deal of mock, Mr. P,” says a facetious man on his right. “ What wine shall I order ? ” says the president. “ Any gentleman like a glass of sherry with his fish ? ” “ I can drink one glass,” says a youth on his left. “ So can I,” remarks another. “ The sherry is wretched here,” replies a third. “ A

bottle of sherry, waiter." "Will you excuse me? I do not take wine," says a fourth. "I pay the extra shilling for my dinner," he continues. "Certainly, sir, certainly." The soup and fish are removed, as is also most of the sherry. The president again asks: "What wine shall I order, gentlemen?" "I am not particular," says one. "I never mix," replies another. "The best of any sort is good enough for me," joins in a third. "I can drink anything," says a fourth. "Please yourself," says a fifth, "the president cannot err." "Give it a name, gentlemen, give it a name," says the obliging president. "Claret for me," replies a sixth. "Much too cold for claret," says the seventh. "I shall go on with the sherry," says the eighth. "I should like a glass of sparkling," say the ninth. "I object to pay six or seven shillings for sparkling," says the tenth. "We should not exceed five shillings for any wine," the moderate man argues. "Not even for port," says old Jones, ironically. "Or claret," says another; "sixteen shillings a dozen is about its value. Anyway, I have better at home that cost me less than that. Five shillings is a gross imposition." Amidst all this babble, the president, who is accustomed to his work, orders one bottle each of claret, sherry, and hock; the latter he and his right-hand friend having without ostentation made up their minds quietly to have. The joints, fowls, and entrées are now on all at one time; for despatch, in more senses than one, is the order of the day with the traveller. A slight lull at all dinners (both

public and private) at this juncture is nearly always noticeable, after which the president challenges them all round to take wine with him ; the teetotaler usually filling his glass with water, and joining in the simultaneous clatter of "Mr. President, Mr. Vice, and gentlemen, good health to you!" The president's attention is now called to the "dead man" in the shape of the empty claret-bottle, and another bottle of claret is ordered. "A glass of wine with you, sir!" says a neighbouring friend. "Thank you." They nod, and others repeat the question and the answer and the nodding : the president not forgetting to take wine with his brother officer, the Vice.

It has been aptly said that a good dinner sharpens wit and softens the heart (charity organizers are alive to the latter fact). The company therefore becomes more chatty and agreeable. Politics and theology are wisely excluded from conversation, although on some occasions I have listened to some very heated discussions on these topics, noted more for their strength of assertion and personal abuse than their force of logic and argument. If on Monday, the conversation turns on where each has spent Sunday, who was present, what they had for dinner, and what it cost. If at the end of the week, they talk of where they are going to spend Sunday, and whom they hope to meet—wine, good living, and popular hotels always coming in for a large share of the conversation. I can assure my readers that their customers are not for-

gotten, and it would do some of them no inconsiderable good if they overheard what was said of them. But as what passes in the commercial room is absolutely *sub rosa*, ignorance is bliss, and the customer's peace of mind is undisturbed. "Have you seen Mr. Y.?" asks an old stager. "Yes," is the reply; "and if I bought him at his own valuation, and sold him at mine, I should lose considerably by the purchase." "He is a very different fellow from old So-and-so. He is a brick, and knows how to treat a commercial man. I always give him a turn whenever I can." "Is B. at home?" inquires another. "I don't know; I haven't called for years. I got tired of being humbugged by him. After calling half-a-dozen times, he gave instructions to say that he is not in. I used to see him at the other end of the shop all the time. Do you do with him?" "Very little; and the little I do does not pay me for the time he wastes. I shall not call again. He serves all alike—no one has a good word for him. He is a pig." "Most of the good houses have closed with him," &c. But while we have been chatting the joints have been removed, and the sweets are before us. A gentleman who should know better asks you to take a glass of claret with him just as you are relishing a custard. He nods and drinks; you return the nod and do not drink. The president now asks the Vice, "What have we to come in?" meaning what more wine is there to be added to complete the quantity, viz., a pint to each man at the table. The Vice

counts heads. "There are thirteen of us (travellers do not share the traditional dread of dining thirteen at a table, that one will die before their next meeting) ; we have had five bottles : we have a bottle and a half to come in." "I think you are mistaken," says a gentleman on the left of the president. "There is one gentleman present who is not taking wine, and I object to do so at his expense." "Well, what shall we do, Mr. President ?" "Oh ! order the quantity. We have had a splendid dinner, the landlord is a decent fellow, and we must have the quantum." The usual assent to port with the cheese being given, a bottle and a half of port is ordered. A young traveller will hardly believe that such despotism was customary, and that such unfairness, not to say injustice, was for years submitted to. So strong was the great majority in its favour that presidents have refused me a seat at the table because I daily protested ; and I have known the full quantity of wine ordered in when three gentlemen have dined who did not take wine, so that three pints extra were drunk by the others. This was infamous ; the pleas in its favour were custom, the landlord having put on a "sumptuous spread," and a wine dinner kept the table select. I argued that the custom was bad, and even un-English : that the proprietor should prepare a more modest repast and charge for each thing on its own merit, and that one should not be compelled to pay half-a-crown for a pint (about five-eighths of an imperial pint) of inferior wine, because the landlord

could not give you so many courses for two shillings. The proprietor invariably replied that he was in the hands of the travellers ; they claimed the room to themselves and made their own rules ; if any one wished to pay a shilling extra for dinner who did not take wine, he had no objection ; but it was in the hands of the president. With respect to the custom of keeping the table select, it certainly prevented men of small means, who, as commercial men, had a perfect right to a seat at the dinner-table, from sitting there ; and it also kept a great number of the best men away—men of some dignity and self-respect, who could not by their presence countenance so gross a system. In fact, there was no valid argument in its favour. The principle is a rotten one. The true science of all business transactions should be based on securing a fair remunerative profit on all articles sold. I know that a certain kind of business policy can be advanced by catering for the public whim, and by taking advantage of ignorant gullibility. The grocer, e.g., selling his sugar at less than cost, and tea at fifty per cent. profit, throwing in presents. All this is fallacious and unbusiness-like—mere playing at commerce. You may further argue that the buyer in many instances is aware that “a sprat is given to catch a mackerel ;” that he knows the first number of many articles is sold at less than cost to make one believe the range is cheap. But no business man acts on such a blind faith ; few, I imagine, live in such a fool’s paradise. Then why not educate

men to use and trust their judgment in all their purchases?

An amusing incident occurred at a dinner at which I was present. A young traveller—a greenhorn—being a teetotaler, asked the president if, by paying a shilling extra, he might be allowed to dine. “Certainly,” replied the president with a knowing wink. On the dinner-bill being handed to him for endorsement after the vice-president had divided it, he addressed the young man, wishing to be quite sure that he had rightly understood him : “ You wish to pay a shilling extra for your dinner ; the bill is 5s. 3d., you will therefore have 6s. 3d. to pay.” Of course the young man protested, and was let off by paying the 5s. 3d., although he drank no wine.

But whilst I have been narrating the preceding incidents the port wine has been brought in, the glasses are filled, and the president gives the health of “ The Queen,” which is right loyally responded to ; and I believe, with the exception of the military and naval officers’ mess, the commercial travellers are her only subjects who toast her Majesty every day in the year. The custom is not to do this until the cloth has been removed ; but economy of time prevents this in many cases being strictly adhered to. Remarks are now made on the vintage of the port. Too new and sweet for some ; others think it a blended wine ; few know anything at all about it. The majority, nevertheless, are agreed that it is not worth half the 6s. or 7s. charged for it in the bill. The president now looks

at his watch, finds the hour is gone, and puts the question, “What shall we say, Mr. Vice?” it being the latter’s duty to propose the next toast. “I give you,” he says, “something original, ‘Absent friends.’” This he says ironically, it being one of our oldest and most popular toasts. I have therefore used it in the dedication of this work, and again join you heartily in it. If a single man, he will occasionally give “Sweethearts and wives;” if married, “Wives and sweethearts.” If disposed to sentiment, “May the tears of friendship crystallize as they flow, and be worn as diadems around the necks of those we love.” If a religious man, “Rusty swords and dirty Bibles.” If a sterling man, “May men of principle be our principal men.” If a rich man, “In going up the hill of prosperity, may we never meet a friend.” If a jocular fellow, “The knock-kneed Quaker,” which, being interpreted, means “A friend in(k)need.” If an American, “May we always have the bread wherewith to make the toast.” If a youth, “Those we love, and those who love us,” to which an *addendum* is usually made, “And those who don’t, may God change their hearts;” and so on *ad infinitum.*

The bill being divided, the president announces the division; while the coppers over and above are placed in the boxes for the Commercial Travellers’ Schools and the Commercial Travellers’ Benevolent Institution, usually kept on the mantel-piece. These boxes, however, having on several occasions been robbed of their

contents, a better plan is being adopted, viz., that of entering each day's amount in a memorandum book, and of making the landlord responsible for it. I have omitted another slight argument in favour of retaining the wine system, namely, that there would otherwise be no coppers for the pence boxes. This, however, has been smartly replied to by the supporters of the free tables, by the institution of a penny daily collection after each dinner. This, in most instances, results in a much greater amount than under the old system.

I may further add that in hundreds of hotels the wine system is now abolished. Men do as they please ; and where it is still retained it is quite optional whether one takes wine, and in no instance is he charged a share in the bill if he does not do so. This is a great improvement on what I have previously recorded ; but it has not come about without hard-fought battles and much loss of friendship. For the first twelve years of my travelling I was an absolute abstainer from all intoxicating drinks, and I did my part in opposing so dishonourable a system. And no one will be more gratified than myself to hear that the last vestige of a wine dinner is gone, never to be resuscitated. I know of no greater bane to a young man leaving the warehouse and his home to travel than that of being compelled either to pay for a pint of wine daily and not drink it, or to pay and drink, or be looked upon as mean or unmanly. Aged men, who should have known better, instead of protecting, goaded him on or

treated him with derision because he had the courage to say No. I must confess with much sorrow that wine dinners have been the cause of many a man's utter ruin. The one I have described represents hundreds at which I have dined, and is an average report of thousands of others in the commercial hotels of Great Britain. They are still to be found where less light has been shed and less intelligence awakened.

I have spent but few Sundays in the commercial room, but the few I have experienced were of anything but an elevating character. I have read of one which I have no reason to doubt as being overdrawn—"My First Sunday in a Commercial Room," by Frank Foster—which, for eating and drinking, bloated behaviour, and indecent, not to say inhuman, conduct, could not easily be matched. Suffice it to say that the dinner in question lasted five hours of hard eating and harder drinking. Eight men were dining, the bill was twenty-five shillings each. This, I am happy to say, took place considerably over twenty years ago; and it would be almost impossible nowadays to be repeated.

It may not be out of place to give the following after-dinner practical joke—

The Saracen's Head Hotel, Lincoln, was noted for three things: a very gruff landlord, a very cheeky waiter, and "365." The latter term being a synonym for the very best rice-pudding I, or any one else, ever tasted, and as it was produced every day in the year we christened

it "365." I can vouch for it being on the table twice a month for twenty-two years, and always good alike. I may add that if half a dozen were required they were always forthcoming. But it is of Arthur the waiter I would speak. It was often suspected that this swallow-tailed, modest-looking *garçon* was guilty of removing the decanters, and especially the small black bottles of crusty, "bee's-wingy" old port before they were quite empty; this was especially noticed by a Mr. Thompson, a sharp-witted "commercial," who on the day in question hinted the fact to the president. It was a rather large dinner party, and Arthur was in unusually good form. A pint of old port was ordered and emptied; the bottle was partly refilled with salt, pepper, cayenne, mustard, Worcester sauce, chili vinegar, anchovy, &c. "Bring in the bill, Arthur," said the president. "Yes, sir!" and, as usual, Arthur hurriedly took off the black bottle. The company waited some time, but no Arthur and no bill appeared. Whereupon the "vice" was asked to ring the bell. In came "Buttons." "Tell Arthur to bring in the dinner bill at once," said the president. "Please, sir, he can't, he's nearly dead, he's choked." The gentlemen at the table became alarmed, hurried out of the room to find poor Arthur in a most painful position. He was black in the face, and surrounded by his fellow-servants. On his recovery he solemnly promised never again to test the quality of leavings in the black bottle.

COMMERCIAL ETIQUETTE.

“ Of things once received, confirmed by use, long usage is a law sufficient. In civil affairs, where there is no other law, custom itslef doth stand for law.”—HOOKER.



CHAPTER VI.

Commercial Etiquette.

LIKE debts of honour, the unwritten laws of the commercial fraternity are acknowledged and respected. The fines are seldom enforced, the rules being of so natural a character and so easy of observance, having grown and been evolved out of the good feeling and respect for the general well-being and comfort of each and all. Even though the tariff for beds, breakfasts, dinners, teas, suppers, servants' fees, &c., are all fixed, no printed list of charges is seen. We owe our predecessors a debt of gratitude for the many comforts daily at our command, and for the "Home from home" which we find in all the hotels where there is a commercial room. I will not trouble the reader by enumerating the many small courtesies of life—small in themselves, but, like all minor matters, of much importance as adding

to the sum total of the pleasure of our daily existence. But I will speak of the rules we observe which are not usually known to the general public.

For instance, no gentleman enters the commercial room without giving the “seal” of the day to those present. Several voices (always sufficient to ensure a warm welcome) respond to the salute ; be it a “Good morning, gentlemen !” on entering the room, a “Good-night !” when retiring to rest, or “Good-day to you, gentlemen !” when leaving the town. No one is permitted to smoke in the room until nine p.m. ; and even at that hour good breeding is often manifested by the question, “Is smoking disagreeable to you during supper? If so, I will refrain.” The person who “lights up” before nine o’clock is liable to a fine. I have heard novices, strangers, and raw young travellers rebuked for breaking this rule ; but apology is always sufficient for unwitting error in this respect. In “Punch” the question was once asked by the president of a dinner table, “Will any gentleman say a little more pudden?” The reply was, “No gentleman would say a little more pudden.” I may add that no commercial *gentleman* would remain in the room covered or come to the breakfast table with his slippers on, or clean his finger nails anywhere but in his bedroom or in the lavatory. I regret to say that there is a necessity to mention these matters, for in many second-rate commercial hotels, and in most of the temperance hotels—which in many other respects are to be commended—

these dirty habits prevail. Another unwritten law is that the first-comer is president at the dinner, and the last-comer vice-president. This rule is never broken unless by the wish of the gentleman in office, who would himself ask another to take his position. Should the president be otherwise engaged at the appointed hour a few minutes' grace is permitted ; some one else officiates, but immediately vacates the position when the president enters. If the gentleman in question remains in the hotel for weeks (as some Birmingham men do), he retains his post for the whole time.

I have always considered the manner of selecting the officers (though admirable in quickly deciding the matter) as open in some respects to grave objections. One of them is when the first-comer happens to be a young green "goose of a fellow," who has not courage enough to say "boo" to his anserine brother, much less sufficient experience to carve him. I well remember my first attempt as president when no one would act as a substitute for me. I made all sorts of excuses, such as "having a special appointment," or "wanting to catch the 1.50 train," &c. I shall never forget the nervous anxiety, the cold perspiration, the red cheeks, the colour of which deepened as one old fogey asked me for the "merry-thought" of a fowl and a piece of the breast ; a second for the liver and wing ; a third for a side bone and a slice of the back. In my heart of hearts I resolved never to be first again so long as I might travel. I have more than

once suggested that the oldest gentleman in the room or the oldest traveller should be president ; but the very rational reply has always been, “ How are you to know who is the oldest ? ” And again, if you could, would it not be too hard upon the oldest always to do the carving, which is no small matter at large hotels in our big towns. There, from fifteen to twenty hungry souls sit down to the midday meal. The landlord often has much cause for complaint, so much good food being spoiled by the amateur carvers.

The other meals are ordered and partaken of by each individual agreeable to his own time and taste, and therefore they require no special comment. Thirty or forty years ago, when driving was at its zenith, men used to meet at certain popular hostelries, and during the evening hot suppers were an institution, or what we now call a knife-and-fork or thick tea. Customers used to be invited ; and after this heavy meal the “ church-warden clay ” and sundry “ hot gins ” followed, interlarded with some old-fashioned song-singing, with a chorus which had some “ go ” in it. These varied elements made up a pleasant though somewhat grotesque evening’s amusement.

An etiquette outside the commercial room is equally observed ; and no gentleman intrudes his presence, much less attempts to introduce business, when another is engaged with a buyer. If you are on very good terms both with the customer and the traveller in

possession, it is permissible to shake hands and retire at once. At first blush it might appear that men in the same trade, being strong competitors, would scarcely be on the most friendly terms : but for obvious reasons they are most intimate, and, as a rule, invariably polite to each other. More than this, they are in the habit of giving to each other information of the greatest service. I remember a most notable exception to this rule in the case of "Frank," a well-known and very smart traveller, and "John," the "Manchester Infant," not less well known. "Frank" was busy one day showing his spring prints, when "John" made his appearance, and not being satisfied with having shaken hands with their mutual friend the draper, "John" hung about the shop somewhat chagrined to see "Frank" booking his order for new prints. He at last took the unusual liberty of sitting down in the shop. This so exasperated "Frank" that he shouted, "I say, John, one fool is enough at a time." This had its effect, and cured "John" of so gross a breach of commercial etiquette.

To make an appointment with a customer and to have the first turn is also well understood. I have gone into a small town with a strong competitor by the same train, each of us having had but one customer, and we tossed up to see who should go in first. If our client was a decent fellow, he would understand the transaction and would divide his order between us. To attempt to "best" one another, or to do a mean, uncourteous, ungentle-

manly act, is seldom resorted to ; but I have not forgotten an arrangement entered into by a friend of mine with myself to keep an unpopular member of our fraternity outside a place for a whole morning. It was in this wise. The three of us were going to a certain town in Lincolnshire over-night, where there were only two good drapers, each of whom would not do business with you if you called upon his opponent. We therefore arranged for one of us to be in Mr. A.'s and the other in Mr. B.'s at 8.30 a.m., which appointment we religiously kept, much to the annoyance of our unpopular friend, who sauntered out at 8.45 a.m. to find the shops occupied for some hours. Rushing out before 9 a.m. is considered in an ordinary way most despicable, although, as I have already said, there is no written code of laws to prevent a man from following his own bent. One of the smartest things I ever saw done was in a town where a traveller had been over-night to see a customer, which he had failed to do. Having gone to some distant town, he (*i.e.*, the customer) was not expected home until the morning. The traveller left his samples, and was there a few minutes after nine o'clock the next morning, only to find another gentleman in possession. Now neither of them had an actual appointment with the silk mercer, for neither had seen him in order to make an appointment. However, nothing daunted, the gentleman who was in the town first remembered hearing over-night by what train the customer was expected home in the morning,

and he at once sallied forth to the station, met the train, and walked arm-in-arm into the establishment with his customer, much to the annoyance of the other man who had been waiting so long. This appears sharp practice, but it was quite within the lines of courtesy and respect due to a competitor.

Upon the whole, commercial men are most courteous and respectful towards one another. Their calling, which takes them from home, seems from that very fact to create and develop a disposition to make each other as comfortable as possible. There is also a desire, after the hard struggle of the day's business is over, to fraternize and to get as much enjoyment out of life as circumstances will permit. I may also add (although I have no figures at my disposal) that my impression is, that in no class of the community is there so great a proportion of men who are freemasons. I mention this as an additional reason for the general good feeling that exists.



A DAY WITH A "JOLLY GOOD FELLOW."

“A fellow of infinite jest—of most
Excellent fancy.”

“HAMLET,” Act v., Sc. i..



CHAPTER VII.

A Day with a “Jolly Good Fellow.”

IN that part of England from where the proverbial wise men left, never to return, the appellation “jolly good fellow” is said to be only a nickname for a fool. There is a sense in which this is perfectly true ; and that an easy-going, free-hearted, large-souled man is often a fool to himself there is no gainsaying. But we cannot place our “jolly good fellow” in Carlyle’s sweeping category, for he is just the opposite of a fool, being a well-read, clever fellow ; yet in all candour we must add that he is not noted for the wisdom of industry, the genius of perseverance, or for his application to business. He is not the kind of man that you meet going by the 6.30 a.m. train, or taking an order late on a Saturday. Improving the shining hours is not his forte, and he lays no particular claim to the storing of honey, having so

much of the milk of human kindness in his nature, and the element of vinegar being conspicuous by its absence. The "jolly good fellow's" friends are innumerable. Yes! Bob (he is always called by his Christian nickname) is a fellow we all like to meet, for we are sure of a pleasant evening in his company; not a few of us making it a point to be at the same town and to stay at the same hotel. Even the most precise, industrious, and punctilious will alter his arrangements and stay overnight that he may have the pleasure of "Bob's" company. "Halloa! glad to see you here, old fellow," says a particular friend of his; "anything on this evening? any business about?" "I haven't soiled paper to-day," replies Bob (meaning that he had not booked an order). "My friends 'want not nothing,' as they say in Norfolk, and there's nothing moving but stagnation, and that's at a standstill," he continues. "Ah! trade is a little dull, Bob; but we'll shut up shop. Will you have fifty up?" "Why, certainly." Bob no sooner enters the billiard-room than three or four old "pals" accost him. "Glad to see you, my boy! How are you? What will you have?" &c. He beats everybody at billiards, pool, shell out, or pyramids; and somehow or other men like to be beaten by Bob for the prestige of talking about it on the morrow. "Holloa," shouts he, "Phelps here to-night!" as he by accident sees a playbill. Down goes the cue, on goes his coat, and they all instinctively go with him, for are they not aware of his excellent judgment of the

histrionic art? Have they not seen him as an amateur in the very character that Phelps is to play to-night? And do they not remember how he brought down a packed house? And were not some sixty guineas made after all expenses were paid for the Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Institution when he played for them? After the play they return to the hotel. Fresh arrivals are there all ready to greet "Bob" with a "Glad to see you, old fellow!" Half-a-dozen chairs are at once vacated to give him a seat, and as many offers of grogs and cigars are made for our hero. Slippers are ordered, the fire is replenished, and so are the glasses. A song is requested, but no one can sing until "Bob" gives them his favourite: and then each has after his own song a "call," and, strange to say, the call is seldom or ever made in vain. The liberty of giving a recitation, or of telling a good story in lieu of a song, is permitted. Our "jolly good fellow" sings two or three songs to the one of others, with several good recitations thrown in; the "Charge of the Light Brigade" being usually asked for and given in excellent style. Midnight is now reached; "the workers" of the road retire to rest; two or three late arrivals make their appearance, and as every one knows "Bob," he must "stay up another half-hour and have one with me." "And with me" is repeated. "What are you drinking?" "Oh! Irish whisky." Glasses are again filled, pipes and cigars again lighted, and the "flow of soul," if not the "feast of reason," goes

merrily on until the small hours. “Any more orders for the bar? is asked by the waiter (who looks more like a vomited ghost than a human being). Orders are again given, the company is again thinned. Whist is suggested. “I’ll make one at ‘nap’ for half an hour,” says Bob.” “I’ll join you,” says another. “I’m in if you promise to finish by one o’clock.” “Oh, certainly, certainly!” Three or four play, and as many look on, and they never play after the time stated. “What, never? Well, hardly ever!” And so our “jolly good fellow” is always making every one as happy as the day is long, and the days are very long with them, as you have already seen. At least that portion of the day is long which is not the working part.

Now if we could follow our “jolly good fellow” through the week, we should find that in all probability five nights out of the six are spent as I have recorded. The marvel is that our “jolly good fellow’s” body and mind are not exhausted or, to say the least, considerably impaired; but it is not so. I have known several men of this character for many years, and have not seen the slightest falling off in their rollicking humour and flow of animal spirits: their boast being that they usually “go to bed and get up the same day,” and therefore cannot be called indolent. “Bob” is not a representative of the “La-di-da” man whom I shall mention, who breakfasts at ten o’clock, &c. No; the strangest thing about him is that he is usually the first down, clean shaved, and looking as

"spick and span" as the latest military production from a band-box. He chaffs the "early to bed" men as they come down for being very poor mortals to require so much sleep. He is ready for and enjoys his chop in the morning, and cracks his joke about Cromwell's famous luncheon when he "took a chop at the King's Head." He keeps the guests at table roaring with laughter at his quaint tales and romantic imaginings. As a specimen: a courtier once asked the king if Cromwell won the next battle what he would do, as he would then be unable to continue to reign (rain). "Why, I should then muzzle," replied the king. At this moment I also remember a favourite repartee that he was fond of quoting. Two Irishmen were walking past the gallows, when Mike said to Pat, "If the gallows had its due, where would you be now, old fellow?" "Oh," said Pat, "I should at this moment be walking alone." One more of "Bob's" pleasantries was a story of Sydney Smith and the king. The king accosts Sydney by saying, "I hear that you have laid a heavy wager that you will make a pun upon any subject between the hours of 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Now, as a test, make one upon me." "I would," replied Sydney, "but you are no subject." And so our "jolly good fellow" is clear-headed, sharp-witted, and smart, no matter where or when you meet him. If in a railway carriage, he had always the latest news to impart, or some startling adventure to relate. He was always modest in the presence

of ladies, but was brimming over with fresh thought and genial pleasantries. I well remember, as a greenhorn, my first meeting with him, and how I was taken in and sold twice in one day by cheerful "Bob." "A very singular thing," said he, taking up *The Times* and looking down the list of births; "they say that on a Wednesday—this is Wednesday, is it not?" "Yes," I innocently replied. "They say that all the births advertised on Wednesday are illegitimate." "Indeed," said I, unwittingly, "how is that?" "It's very true; don't you see, they come before the marriages? Births, Marriages, Deaths." Result—the laugh of the whole company at my expense. The other "sell" of his was the following: "I didn't know old Ryland was a literary man before." "Didn't you?" said I, "I did; I have heard that he has printed a Bible with his own interpretations and comments, and gives copies away to his customers." "Ah, yes!" he remarks, "I have heard of that; but what I refer to is the fact that he has purchased *The Manchester Examiner*." "Dear me, what has he given for it?" "Well," replies Bob, "there is a great difference between the statements. I have heard £20,000, and yesterday I heard it was £30,000; but now I know the exact sum." "What is it?" I eagerly asked. "The amount was one penny," he replied; and a hearty laugh followed from our "jolly good fellow" with myself at so good a joke.

No one was ever offended at him, and all who knew

him expected to be cheered out of their gloom by him, and they were sorry when they were not going the same journey. I say none was ever offended. I correct myself by relating an incident where he did give offence to a very crotchety old stager. It was in this wise : Some score of us were listening to his drollery, when he accosted in his off-hand way a young gentleman who had just balanced his accounts by saying, " You will excuse me, sir ; it's very singular, but though at some distance from you, I can tell you exactly what amount of money you have in your pocket ; and I've done this more than once, being gifted with second-sight or thought-reading." "Indeed," said he. "Yes," says Bob, "if you will count it on the table again I will place the amount on paper. You shall do the same ; and then we will hand the papers to any one you please, and he shall say if the papers agree." It was done. The gentleman who received the papers said they agreed "to a penny." This astonished all present, and one old stager in particular, who happened to have a good deal of money about him that evening ; and so, wishing to put the matter to a further test, he said, " Do you mean to tell me that you know the exact amount I have in my pocket ? " " Most decidedly I do." " Well," said he, " that's more than I do. I'll count it." And after he had got it all on the table, he figured away and soon handed his paper, "Bob" however, having given his in first. " Now," said the old man, " for the benefit of the

room read it aloud." "Bob's paper says that at this moment the amount of money in your pockets is absolutely none." The old gentlemen hurriedly took his money from the table, retired to bed, and never spoke to "Bob" again.

And so I might go on indefinitely, enumerating the happy hits, the smart repartees, and the interesting tales of our "jolly good fellow." It is now thirty years since we first met ; and he still looks as happy and beaming as ever. As I have hinted, our very jolly friends seldom make a fortune for themselves, but they do more than this for hundreds of their fellow-travellers. They help to make a very arduous and toiling life a more pleasant one ; they add considerably to the sum of human happiness by bringing a little more sunshine into the world, and they thus make life more worth the living. Among the many regrets I have in leaving the road, the supreme one is in missing the genial countenance, the hearty laugh, and the warm shake of the hand of "Bob," and of many other "jolly good fellows."

"Brooks of Sheffield" is, however, quite another style of man. Here is his autobiography as he gave it to me :—"I am eighty years old ; I have travelled fifty-eight years ; I married my second wife six years ago ; I always go home on a Friday night ; she is a good wife to me." These words were spoken by a white-cravated, nimble old gentleman, who had previously introduced himself to me as "Brooks of Sheffield," friend of Charles

Dickens. "He speaks of me," he continued to say, "in 'David Copperfield,' when he went to the seaside, you know. Mr. Brown, of Messrs. Eagle, Brown, & Co., said that you wished to see me." "I am heartily glad to see you, friend Brooks," I replied; "I have travelled twenty-two years, and considered myself an old traveller, but I am only a youngster compared with yourself. Will you take a little refreshment?—a glass of sherry." "Thank you, not wine. I could drink a glass of beer, but you must not give it me too strong; it won't make me fresh, will it?" said the patriarch of the road. "Dear-a-me," he continued, as we walked through the warehouse, "what a place you've got! Has slackness of trade found you out yet?" I explained to him what I thought to be the cause of so continued a depression, viz., that more goods were produced than could possibly be consumed. "Ah!" said he, "what a change since I travelled fifty-eight years ago. It used to take me two days and a night on a coach to get from Sheffield to London, and now I come up by Great Northern express in three hours and two minutes. No," he said, correcting himself, "twelve minutes," and added, "My memory is not so good as it used to be, sir." "But you have given up travelling now, Mr. Brooks?" "Oh dear no; I am on a journey now. Look, here are some of my samples," showing me a box of juvenile tools, which he pulled out of the tail-pocket of his black frock coat. "I don't carry so many samples now as I used to do.



We have spent £1,300 in an illustrated design book, and I travel more by mind now, you know, describing the articles as you see here," pointing to an illustrated sheet. "Our firm is Brooks & Son; I am the Son, and our place is called Howard Works." I then asked him if he still remembered Charles Dickens. "I should think I do," he replied. "Why, he visited me, lent me his books as they were published, and speaks of me when he goes to the seaside. I used to meet him regularly the other side of Cheapside, at a tavern close to the church—not Bow Church, but at the back—in a very small, dark, smoky, dingy room. Ah! what evenings they were!" "Will you dine with me, Mr. Brooks, on Sunday," said I. "No, thank you," he replied; "I always go home on a Friday night to Sheffield. I come to London every month. When I first travelled I only came up twice a year, and I can't do half as much business in the twelve times as I used to do in the two journeys. You will excuse me now, sir," he concluded, "I have an appointment." "Allow me to tie up your parcel, Mr. Brooks." "Excuse me," he said, "I like it twice round," referring to the string, which I had put only once round the parcel, and which he evidently considered a slovenly piece of work. Then, taking up his bag, off Mr. Brooks trudged, as anxious as ever to keep his appointment, book his order, and catch the 2.45 train on the morrow. At nine the next morning Brooks of Sheffield was seen hurrying to keep another

appointment, and carrying rather a heavy sample-case on a hot July day. One was disposed to pity this veteran of the saddle-bag, turnpike-road, and railway, but he appeared still to thoroughly enjoy travelling, never forgetting that he was "Brooks of Sheffield, friend of Charles Dickens." Charles Dickens was also a friend to all commercials, and was in the habit of using our room in preference to the coffee-room, and always had a good cheery word for the "Bagman," not forgetting us in his prosperity, for he occupied the chair at our annual dinner on two occasions, in 1854 and 1859. I think I can give a reason for this sympathy with our fraternity. It is this: Charles Dickens sympathized with all men of generous temperament and genial habit. He mingled freely with commercial travellers; he found them to be full of anecdote, wit, and good-fellowship, and possessing many of the qualities with which he was most in sympathy. He may not have forgotten either poor Micawber, whom he alludes to as follows: "I cannot satisfy myself whether she told me that Mr. Micawber had been an officer in the Marines, or whether I have imagined it. I only know that I believe to this hour that he was in the Marines once upon a time, without knowing why. He was a sort of town traveller for a number of miscellaneous houses now, but made little or nothing of it, I'm afraid." Poor Micawber would have made less to-day.

THE ARISTOCRATS OF THE ROAD.

Most travellers remember the story told of King George, who one day, when at Brighton, noticing a number of gentlemen rushing hither and thither with parcels under their arms, inquired who they were ; and when he was informed that they were commercial travellers, and were a most industrious class of men, he replied, "They are of great value to the state, bring them here and I will confer the honour of knighthood upon them all ;" and for many years afterward we were styled the "knights of the road." I cannot give my readers the names or the number of those who received the king's honour, but I can give them the names of men who, for noble deeds done and victories achieved, received titles at the hands of our fraternity. Amongst the many I may mention "The Duke of Richmond," a fine old gentleman of aristocratic appearance, well known in Yorkshire, who represented a foreign court, and retired to one of the large government mansions. Another popular man was "Sir Roger Gresley," of whom some remarkable stories are told, but with which I will not trouble the reader. The most blue-blooded member that I knew was "Baron Hussey," of the Midlands, who was *hand* and *glove* with the noblest of his time, and who was also noted for his special breed and extensive flocks of *lambs* and *kids*. I next remember "My Lord Bishop of Boston." His lordship was a great authority on

cucumbers, roses, and mustard oil. The greatest and most eloquent orator of the road was “Lord John Russell Boor,” who, when in possession of the House, never failed to make a good impression.



TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING, PAST AND
PRESENT,
AND THE PROBABLE FUTURE OF
TRAVELLING.

“ The past is all by death possest,
And frugal fate that guards the rest
By giving bids us live to-day.”

FENTON.



CHAPTER VIII.

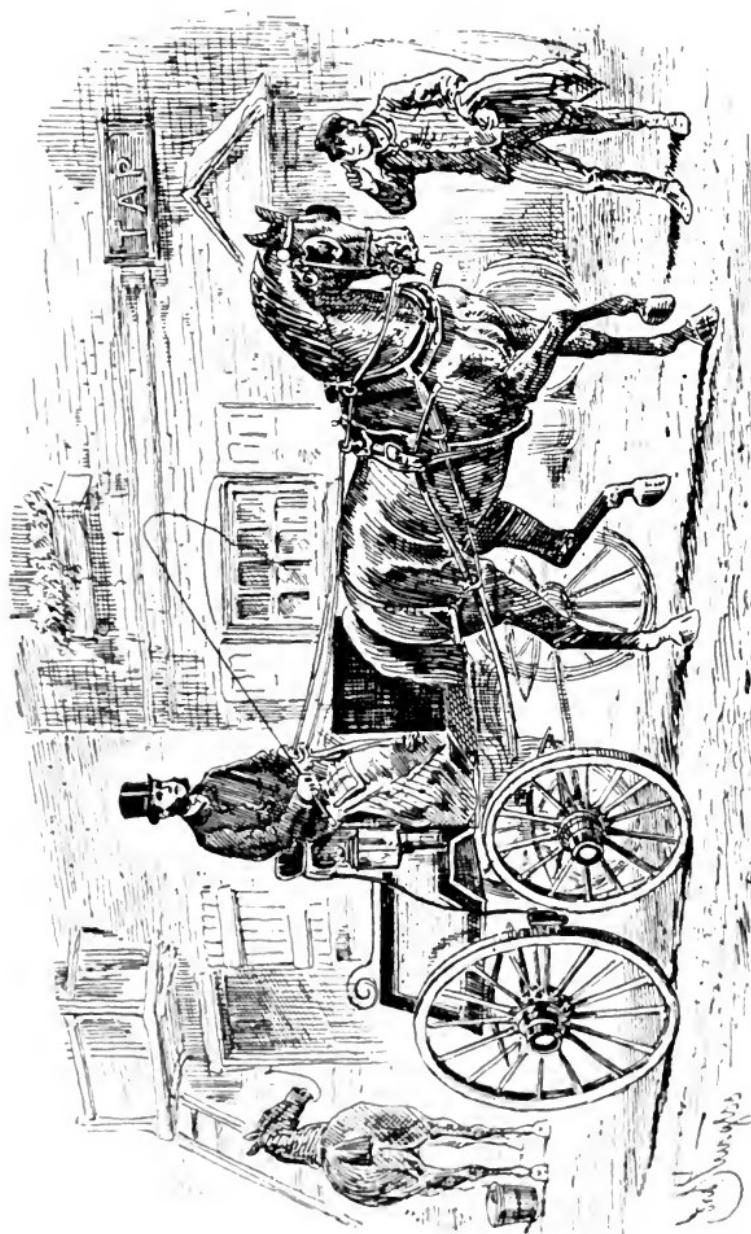
Travellers and Travelling, Past and Present, and the Probable Future of Travelling.

THE locomotive and the electric current have revolutionized many of the phases of life, and few callings have been more completely changed by these agencies than that of the commercial traveller. And although giving us many advantages, in some respects they are not an unmixed benefit to the human race. For these and other causes have made the competition in trade so keen that it has become impossible for any but first-rate men of the strongest physical frames and mental calibre to stand the wear and tear necessary to the conducting of business to anything like a successful issue.

The survival of the strongest and ablest, if not the fittest and best, being the all-important factor in commercial travelling, as it is in every other department of

life, it is only those who are abreast of and in sympathy with the times, those who can think and act with precision, that are even in the race. For as a friend of mine says, "If you mean to catch the hare you must follow her wherever she goes ; and it's of no use your going over the ditch to the right, if she has gone over the fence to the left." This is a homely illustration, but it vividly represents the rapid and subtle changes to which the art of trading is now subject. How different all this is from the old-fashioned, steady-going dingdong of business, when the commercial travellers bestrode their horses, with their saddle-bags in front of them, containing their samples ! They left London for six months at a time, taking the statements of accounts with them, and only writing occasionally, and sending their orders but once a week or at longer intervals, thus saving the expensive postage. What a contrast to the old coaching times, when it took as many days as it does hours now to reach London ! when the shopkeeper had to leave his bed at all hours in the night to receive his goods from the London stage vans ! Only twenty years ago driving was the order of the day, and then was also the day of *orders*. (Bishops in this respect are like commercial travellers ; they hold their position in virtue of having taken orders.) I remember my first visit to the "White Hart," Gainsborough, a very old but most comfortable hotel. The Boots happening to be out of the way, the old ostler was requested to assist in taking the luggage

AMBASSADORS OF COMMERCE.
THE FOUR-WHEELER.



from the omnibus. I asked him if there were many gentlemen in. He gruffly replied (evidently not appreciating the new state of things), "Three *gentlemen* driving, and six or seven *fellows* by the 'bus."

In the driving days I visited my customers every two months, which was considered by many of them as much too often. The latter part of my travelling days I saw them every fourth week, and many of them every fortnight : always doing the largest trade in towns to which I could go most frequently. Twenty years ago drapers bought heavy parcels twice a year. Nowadays the rule is not to buy a large parcel at all. Contracts are made with such carriers as Sutton, Davis, Foster, the Globe, Roberts and Kent ; and now the parcels post gives such facilities to the retail man for getting his wants supplied, that travelling (no matter how large and good the house one represents) has become one of the most laborious and anxious of positions. In lieu of taking one or two good orders daily, men have to take ten or a dozen. Instead of visiting one or two towns in a week, they are often in seven or eight, or more. The increase in the expense of paper and string only, necessary for the extra thousands of small parcels in all large wholesale concerns, is something enormous. I have heard old travellers remark that their customers used to come out several miles of a summer evening to meet them, for the prestige and pleasure of their company. The old drivers would spend a day or two with some of their customers ; but

now you get ten minutes' grace, with five or six waiting their turn outside for a similar reception. And if your client is not in a good humour, he goes to his private room, and is "not at home" to any traveller.

It was said that railways would bring all the buyers into the markets, and that travellers would only be known as men who were once useful adjuncts, but who are no more necessary. But such people forgot that there was a down as well as an up line, and that smart active men, hungry for business, would not wait patiently until trade came slowly to them, but would go out and seek it. How this has been verified you can readily test by going to any of the numerous enormous hotels built during the last few years. You will find most of them full of travellers, and unless you write for a bed you have either to sleep in a garret or one is obtained for you elsewhere. This is to be accounted for in a great measure by the large number of special-department men, who, beside the regular traveller, are constantly visiting the large towns ; as many as six representatives being in one town from certain London houses at the same time. Manchester and Glasgow houses are equally notorious in this respect, and it is the rule rather than the exception to meet two, three, or four men from the latter place in the same town, from the same house.

A greater and more deplorable feature of this competition is the extraordinary terms these Scotch houses are in the habit of offering : as *e.g.*, plain linen and Scotch

goods, delivered in November, dated as April, subject to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. discount the 1st June, or a three or four months' bill ; in all, eleven months' credit. The London houses are almost as reckless, delivering silks carriage paid in October, dated February, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. 1st April, or a three months' bill. I mention these matters in no spirit of animosity to any particular house (for we are all sinners more or less in this particular), but to show that travellers were never more in request than at the present moment, and never (if men of real "grit") able to command such handsome remuneration for their services. Only a few years ago there were houses which prided themselves on doing a magnificent business without a single representative. This was no vain boast, but they, like others, have succumbed to the inevitable law, and I am not aware that there are more than one or two houses of any repute that can command any large amount of business without the aid of the commercial traveller.

Again, a few years ago a good wholesale firm would have considered it as *infra dig.* to send out a circular, as a first-class retail concern would to ticket their goods in their windows. Now, the former spends hundreds of pounds per annum in printing, and the latter tickets so much that you fail to see the goods, the tickets being so large and so numerous. If the retail drapers were to read all the circulars that they receive and listen to all that the travellers have to say, they would not have a moment for the conduct of their business, not even if

they gave Sunday to the task. What does it all mean? What would our grandfathers or even fathers say to all this high pressure, this nervous anxiety, this intense rushing as for very life to sell a few pounds more sugar or a few yards more calico than we did the previous year? Are we the happier? Do we enjoy life more than our predecessors? Is the game worth the candle? My forte is not preaching or moralizing; but these questions must force themselves on all reflecting minds. Each one must answer them for himself.

Over-production is answerable in a great measure for our present razor-like competition, while the American high tariff also operates in the same direction. Supply and demand is the one tangible guide for all trading. So long as any goods are bought and sold, this will be of necessity a scientific explanation which cannot be gainsaid. If a man wants a suit of clothes and there are ten tailors who want the order, he will always get his clothes cheaper than if there were but one or two.

In 1872-73-74 nearly every branch of industry was in an abnormal and inflated state. All the world wanted goods, and as we had seventy per cent.¹ of the machinery of the world, Europe and America had to come to this "tight little island" for a large proportion of the goods they wanted. During this most unusual demand (caused

¹ In 1830 the power of machinery, in Great Britain, in mills was equal to 600,000,000 men, or one man being able to produce by its aid as much as 250 men could have accomplished fifty years before that time. What could it not produce to-day?

by two of the great European nations having been in the throes of a gigantic war) our manufacturers literally coined money ; and being puffed up with such success, and thinking that it was normal and lasting, they lost their level heads and invested most of their savings in new machinery, vainly imagining that trade would always be as rosy. The rapid strides we then made by leaps and bounds caused the intelligent foreigner to think that he might as well try and make a few things for himself, and he quickly put the thought into practice. "Charity begins at home," whispered some. "It's time we exercised it," said others. "Those Britishers are dapper hands at shopkeeping, we admit ; but if we place a duty of from forty to seventy per cent. on their goods, we may be able to do a little profitable shopkeeping on our own account." And so they went to work, and did not only a little but a great deal of manufacturing for themselves.

Unfortunately for our own manufacturers, it does not pay to keep machinery idle. It must be kept going at any cost. Well, it has been kept going, and at the cost in most instances of more than the fortunes originally made. This over-production has brought about a keen competition and a lowering of prices unknown before in the annals of British commerce. Four or five years ago we thought goods had seen their lowest, but there has been a steady decline, and, at the moment I am writing, goods are at a ruinously low rate both for the manufacturer and the wholesale merchant. All free traders

believe in a cheap article and plenty of it. "A fair day's pay for a fair day's work" is an excellent motto, and it applies to the artisan and to the manufacturer who has his capital in his machinery and to the trader who uses his brains. I for one am not alarmed. On the contrary, one great and good feature in all this is that the million, the working population, the farm labourer, and the mechanic, were never so well off ; and notwithstanding the present cry of "horrible London," the great bulk of the people were never so well clothed, fed, and cared for in the memory of man. It is the great middle class, the large manufacturers and warehousemen who are at this moment the greatest sufferers, not so much for want of business as from the want of a fair remuneration for capital employed, brain-power expended, and work done. No class of men work harder or have a more anxious existence than the heads of our large mercantile houses.

The following particulars from *The Daily News* will corroborate what I have advanced.

"In truth trade has expanded, and doubtless will expand further, whatever may be the case at the moment. We have grown accustomed to think that the year 1873 marked a period of dead, buried, and in these degenerate days, incomparable prosperity. Strangely enough, however, the exports of the past eleven months only have in many if not all instances greatly exceeded in quantity those of the whole of the said year. The values, however, as we have just seen, are totally untrustworthy

guides to a knowledge of the extent and volume of our foreign trade. In 1872, we exported 3,382,762 tons of iron and steel, then valued at thirty-six millions sterling ; for the past eleven months only of this year, we have exported 3,765,192 tons, valued at only twenty-six and a half millions sterling. In that year, too, we exported 3,538 million yards of cotton goods ; and already this year we have sent abroad 4,185 million yards, although the present valuation is less by ten millions sterling. In many other instances the bulk of trade is more while the value is less. What shall all this profit us if the money value of export trade is no larger ? We do more for no more money, and the exporters' profits are presumably even less than on the export trade of the year 1883. The profits cannot be altogether insignificant nevertheless, seeing that the cost prices of raw material are low enough to leave a large "margin." More than all, it is certain that the augmented bulk of trade goes to sustain a largely increased working population, and here the low cost of imports in the way of food tells favourably, and implies that, even with diminished money wages, those employed upon the manufacture of cheap goods can live and save on wages which are less in pounds, shillings, and pence, but in every other sense are considerable. There is no evidence of seriously diminished trade, and the low range of selling prices is not without its compensations."

So that every buyer who is keeping up his return is

actually doing nearly a third more business; *i.e.*, he is sending out one-third more pieces of manufactured goods than he was a few years ago to produce the same results. So low are present values.

Personally the commercial traveller has in most respects much improved during the last quarter of a century. He is less of an animal, and more of a man. He eats and drinks less, and thinks more; he is more intellectual, if not more divine. He is less like an automaton wound up to go a certain fixed time and to perform certain mechanical gesticulations; or, like the famous marionnettes, only answering to the strings of the man behind the scenes. He has observed the march of intellect and profited by its upward movement. He occupies now a much more important position than formerly, if he be a first-rate man. He is not a traveller or agent; he is even something more than a mere representative. He is an ambassador, not with sealed orders, but with a large margin of play for his own individuality. "After the tenth of the month, sir, go where you please and say what you choose; only let me see a sheet of foolscap well filled with orders on my desk every morning," once said a principal to me more than twenty years ago. But few governors were then smart enough to see the necessity of such a liberty, which would develop the best energies of their men; and there was not the need for this margin that there is to day. "The time has come, and a man with and for the time," was

once said of a great but now greater statesman. It is quite as true to say that the times have changed, and the whole aspect of business and the appliances necessary to secure it ; therefore you must have men who are able to adapt themselves to the times. The ambassadors must be left free to act very much as the day and the hour demand. And it is only this liberty that will assist in developing the capacity of the salesman, and add to the lustre of great business houses.

This class of representative has passed the “ examination ” period of travelling, and can bring to the discharge of his work experience, now so necessary and so vastly superior to the mere theory of business, which the rapidly changing modes of commerce demand.

There is little hope for a man rising if he has not carved out for himself a position prior to the attainment of his thirtieth year. He may not have reached the goal, but he must have shown a talent, a fitness for a position of trust and responsibility. There is another type of travellers, who, having made a competency, if not a fortune, are satisfied with being mediocre. They believe in the “conservation of energy,” and will not go in for any change that causes extra thought or labour in their declining years. They are passive, and argue that they have had their share of toil of mind and body. The old style was good enough for this man and his father before him ; and he cannot see, for the life of him, why younger and more enterprizing men want to be

constantly altering the old rules and substituting new ideas. The fact is circumstances compel radical changes in the conduct of every business ; and the question is whether you are to drift backwards as the slave of circumstances, to be petrified and fossilized, or whether you will be the creator of some and master of all conditions. I have known scores of old-fashioned conservative travellers who were satisfied with the dingdong of driving six or seven miles an hour, seeing one or two customers a day, and going to villages with a population of a few hundreds, exactly the same number of times per annum as they went to the large towns with their 50,000 or 100,000 ; and thus, not adapting themselves to the new state of things, their trade fell off in the small places, and they were not in the cities often enough to make up the deficiency. Village travellers lose touch with the style necessary for success in big towns, if they ever had it ; and rail travelling totally unfits a man to do justice to the small village customer, who can only do his business in a grandmotherly fashion. It is the spirit of the age that compels men, almost against their wills, to follow an attraction which kindles among them an enthusiasm for commerce. The saddle-bags, the gigs, the four-wheelers, are all left behind by the railroad ; the six to seven miles an hour give way to the sixty or seventy ; the one or two orders per day to one or two and twenty ; the one letter a week to one or two a day, with a telegram or two between. The multiplicity of small things, rapidly but

carefully executed, may be compared with the one or two large parcels of former times.

With all the wear and tear of this friction a great many good points have been forced upon the traveller. For instance, he has not now time for so many heavy meals, and he cannot afford to spend so much money on bitter beer or wine. The hotel proprietors having advanced their prices at least $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., have helped the traveller to a more independent position; and the extra thousands of miles he has now to cover per annum have so increased his travelling expenses that he is glad to economize. So nature's compensating law takes and gives, and is doing for us all, unconsciously to ourselves, a beneficent work. The wine-bibber and the debauchee are no longer in the race, for they cannot compete with the healthy young traveller, the quicked-brained, clear-thinking, active, moderate man—not necessarily a teetotaler, but often more temperate than the so-called temperance men.

Another incalculable benefit conferred by the railroad is that it enables men to live in the centre of their journey, and to get home three or four times during the week; few of them being now compelled to spend Sunday from home. Another enormous boon is that the Great Eastern Railway—and the Great Northern following so good an example—have given them a return ticket at single fare at the end of the week. Other railways it may be hoped will do the same, it being to their

interest to do so ; for hundreds of men will then be able to go home for much less than it would cost them to stay at hotels. The railway companies would receive the single fare where they now receive none, and thus a dual benefit would be conferred. The hotel proprietors will suffer, but the percentage of good is advanced ; and this is as it should be. This is true progress, the real good (a word which is Saxon *god*), and therefore real godliness, for the greatest number. I know of no class of men who are more sinned against than sinning than the commercial travellers. That there are scamps and vagabonds amongst them I will not attempt to deny ; in what class are they not to be found ? But I can assert that the fraternity to which I had the honour to belong for over twenty years, and for which I have still the most profound respect and sympathy, will bear a most scrutinizing and favourable comparison with any other class of men. Those who sit in judgment upon the commercial traveller are usually men who are surrounded by the safeguards of home, of wife and family ties ; these no one can really estimate at their true value but those who for weeks and months are separated from such benign influences. Again, the traveller has large amounts of money at his command ; he exists in the very midst of temptation ; he has a positive excuse for drinking “for the good of the house,” &c., all of which are no mean enemies to encounter. These things test the stuff human nature is made of, and in the case of the traveller they

prove for the most part his superiority to the allurements with which his path is beset. And, to their honour be it said, hundreds of travellers are noble examples to those who sit at home at ease, and who can know nothing of the daily struggles with temptation which the commercial traveller has to encounter.

J. J. Colman, Esq., M.P., speaking at a commercial travellers' dinner at Norwich, said he "had known a good deal of commercial travellers for a very long period. Whilst it was well to look with a discriminating eye on the reports which travellers might bring, it was certain that if there were not a good understanding between principals and their travellers, it would be a bad thing for the house who sent those travellers out. As a matter of curiosity, he had asked his representatives, by way of a joke, what would happen if a firm tried to do without travellers ; and they replied, 'You would maintain a certain amount of your trade for a considerable time, but you would begin to find it fall off unless you had commercial travellers.' He had no doubt that was perfectly true, and he quite agreed with the remark. One of the speakers had referred to the temptations and wear of commercial life, and in recognizing the truth of that remark they ought to highly respect and heartily esteem those travellers who escaped the temptations to which they were exposed, and who conducted themselves honourably and well.. Things had changed in commercial life of late years. He recollects the time when

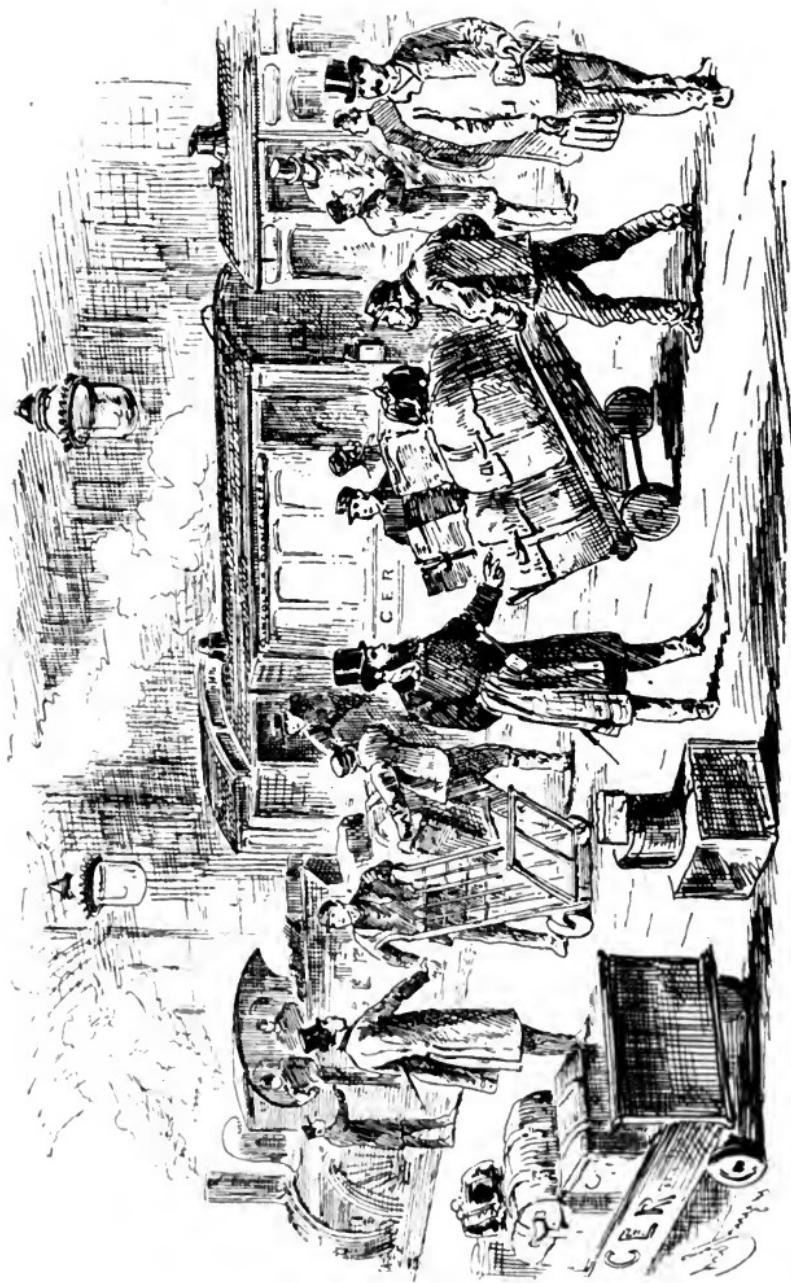
they shook hands with a traveller going to the north, not knowing hardly when he would be back. Those were not the days when one knew exactly where to find a traveller on the Sunday ; but now, if a letter were posted on the Saturday night to the residence of one of their representatives, it was pretty sure to find him. He did not regret ‘the good old times,’ as some persons were apt to do ; for he believed a man did his business no worse in the week because he had an opportunity of spending his Sunday at home with his family. “In thanking Mr. Allen for the complimentary way in which he had proposed his health, and in saying what he had done about commercial travellers he simply gave utterance to what had been in his heart. Though it had not been his lot to have much to do with the road, yet he most heartily, thoroughly, and sincerely sympathized with commercial travellers. Some of the gentlemen who represented his firm had travelled for it between thirty and forty years, and when he had an opportunity of meeting them at the social board or for business purposes, he felt it to be a source of satisfaction and almost of inspiration.”

I repeat that our traveller, by the aid of improved locomotion, is enabled to spend much more time in the bosom of his family at his own fireside ; and under those happier influences he is a wiser and a better man. He is a superior being, physically, intellectually, socially, morally, as compared with the old stager by whose dim but not religious light the modern traveller is too often

judged ; and from the stigma of his misdoings I hope these lines will in a measure relieve his successor. There was an excuse for much of the grossness of the old port-winy tuberosity appearance of the now antique bagman, for he was, for the most part, a bachelor. A bachelor only half lives. He thinks he escapes many sorrows, but he knows nothing of the joys that are more than commensurate. A man who vegetates at hotels becomes a cynical, sordid hypochondriac, compared with the social husband and father. The one is selfish and morose, with all his best feelings parched ; the other is genial, gentle, loving—living a dual life, a second youth over again, in his children. The modern commercial traveller is, therefore, a brighter, wiser, and happier man. He has to compete with forces which urge him onward with almost lightning rapidity ; but he receives increased home comforts and more mental pleasures as his reward.

THE PROBABLE FUTURE OF TRAVELLING.

My main reason for speaking so much of the past and present life and work of the commercial traveller was to draw some distinctions and conclusions respecting the probable position he will hold in the immediate future. I have shown that the entire scope of an ambassador's peregrinations, system of doing business, mode of living, his relation to his employer and customer, has been and is still subject to the great and somewhat grinding law of evolution, and the severe strain of competition, which,



AMBASSADORS OF COMMERCE.

THE RAILWAY STATION.

for better or worse, will force employers to select a very differently constructed being to the old bagman, if they desire to hold and sustain with any degree of success this most important branch of their business machinery. In all great changes some good in the old will be destroyed in making way for the new and greater benefit. Applying this to the subject in hand, I have no misgivings as to the future of the commercial traveller, for whenever a greater degree of intelligence is necessary a higher being is always evolved to carry on the work. I have already shown that the present-day traveller is in many respects by the aforesigned law a vastly superior man, and as the years roll on he will have still to submit to the inevitable, and move on, or he will be moved with the weak "to the wall," for every leading position in all large mercantile houses will require a closer and more intense application of all the faculties ; the hours may be shorter, but the moments will be keener and more anxious ; the business problems will be much more complex for the middle man and the merchant. It will therefore require a much more subtle mind and dexterous hand to bring about results satisfactory to both employers and employés. To no class of business men does this apply with greater force than to the commercial traveller, the great pioneer of all large trading operations, for upon his general intelligence and acumen, upon his power of conception and intrepidity of execution, very much depends. *Ergo*, the men who have not grown and advanced with the times will be

left a long way behind in the race, and those only will be able to retain their positions who can properly estimate and quickly adapt themselves to the ever-advancing and rapidly-changing circumstances, which will continue to influence and govern the entire conduct of the nineteenth century commerce.

Under these altered conditions we must look to the young, pliable, industrious traveller to *make* a brilliant future for himself. There is no appointment in a house of business which offers such scope for large ideas and magnificent results, as the future of travelling, and I can confidently recommend any man with a thorough knowledge of his business to select this work, with this proviso, that if he have all the gifts, all the qualifications of all the best men who have ever travelled combined, and *lacks* that intense application, that determination to work fourteen, sixteen, or even eighteen hours per day, year in and year out, he lacks the one thing above all others needful.





OUR INSTITUTIONS.

“That charity is bad which takes from independence its proper pride, and from mendicity its salutary shame.”—SOUTHEY.



CHAPTER IX.

Our Institutions.

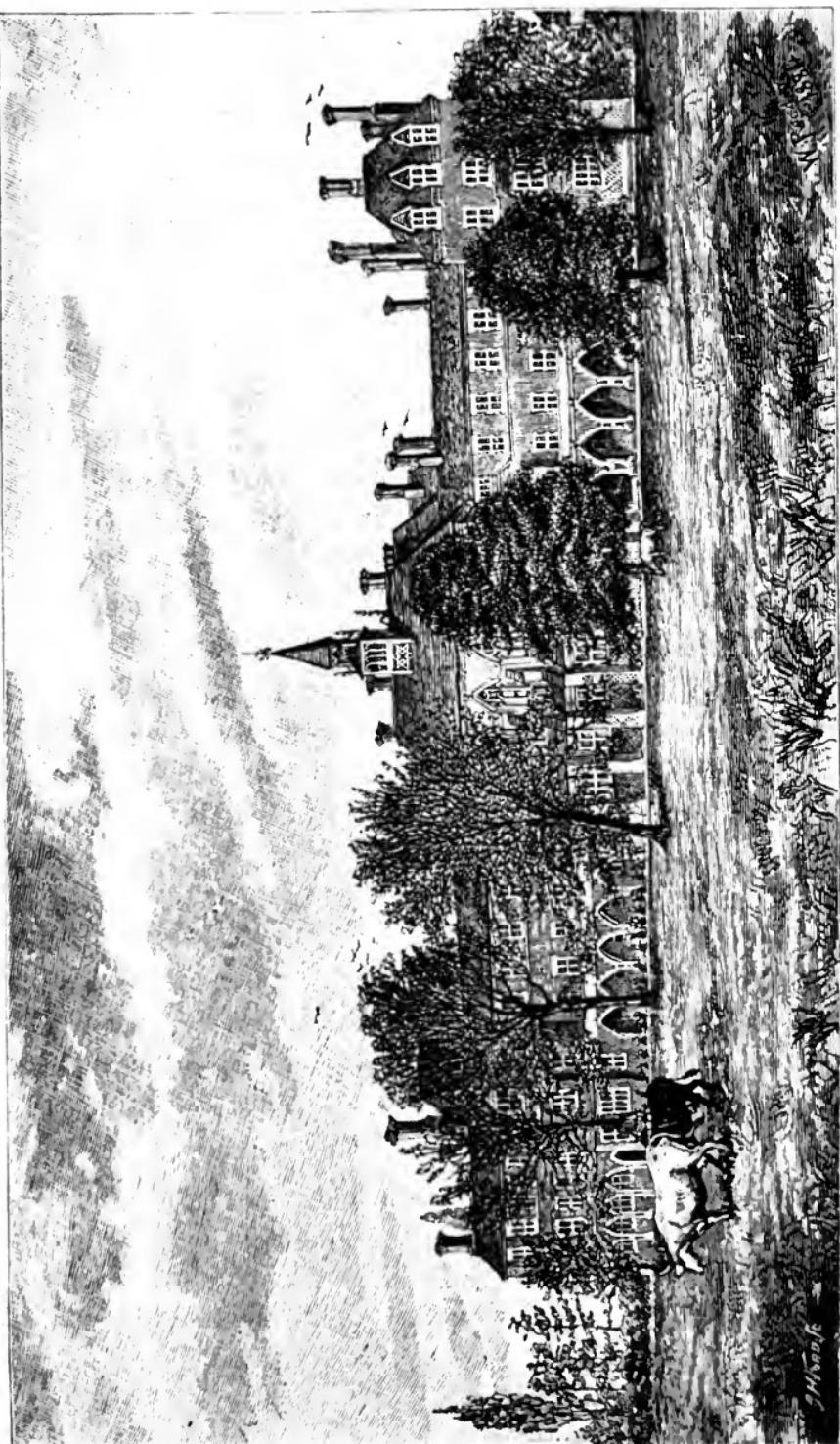
THE Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," and "Charity begins at home," are not quite synonymous adages ; for the former gives an imperative "No" to any dealings by people with those outside their own race, and the latter implies a charity which should have its beginning, though not its ending, with one's own "kith and kin." Christianity has done much to broaden men's views, and make them more cosmopolitan, more humanitarian, and therefore more religious. To all the world and to every creature was the command : "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world ;" but after 1800 years of this preaching, self-preservation, the first law of nature, still strongly asserts itself, and compels us

to provide for ourselves and our own household ; and then, if there be anything to spare, we think of our neighbour. And Heaven knows, with millions of our neighbours the wide world over, how infinitesimal the little to spare is ! To be just, then, to ourselves, our families, and our creditors, before we are generous, is worth remembering ; as also to use much discretion in the giving of charity. Indiscriminate charity is a great curse, for it is a gigantic pauper manufactory. These two errors we should avoid ; and on the principle of helping those who help themselves, we cannot go far wrong if we help the Commercial Travellers' Schools and the Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Institution ; both of them admirable institutions, and the very best insurance companies for commercial travellers to join ; for as long ago as 1859 Charles Dickens, speaking of the former, said "that any commercial traveller could establish an individual right and title by the humble contribution of an annual guinea, and it could be handsomely maintained if every commercial traveller would give to it one half-crown on a given day every year. I hope then, sincerely, that the time is not far distant when the commercial traveller who does not belong to this Institution will be a rare and isolated case. I do hope this with some confidence, because I cannot believe that it is possible that many commercial travellers can look upon their own dear children, and not feel that they would be better and lighter-hearted for being sharers in this institution

Gentlemen," he went on to say, "we should remember to-night that we are all travellers, and that every round we take converges nearer and nearer to our home; that all our little journeys bring us together to one certain end; and that the good that we do, and the virtues that we show, and particularly the children that we rear, survive us through the long and unknown perspective of time." Any commercial traveller who may chance to read this true, beautiful, and touching appeal is less than a man if he does not at once send his guinea, or what he can spare, to the treasurer, Mr. James Hughes, Bow Church-yard, Cheapside—an old traveller, who once publicly said, "All my success in life, humanly speaking, is owing to the habit of self-reliance I learned upon the road;" and of whom another gentleman has privately and voluntarily said in a letter to me this day, "James Hughes has done more for the commercial travellers than any other man living."

I have read a great number of the speeches made at our annual meetings since Dickens spoke, and find that the burden of them, like his, has been an appeal to our body for its personal support. These speeches were from the Duke of Cambridge, Sir Moses Montefiore, the late Dean Stanley, from bishops, successive lord mayors and sheriffs. "Why is it that so few commercial men subscribe?" There is no tangible reason. "A lame excuse is better than none," says the old proverb; but I differ from this wise saw, and consider

a lame excuse *worse* than none ; and the *very lame* excuse that we hear from many is that they do not subscribe because *non-subscribers'* children are admitted. Now there has never been a case of a subscriber's child who has not been finally elected to the benefits of this institution ; therefore the excuse is a very lame one indeed. Further, thousands of pounds have been subscribed by the governors, and are still being continued, because the institution is founded on the principle of " relieving the children of commercial travellers without reference to the parents having been subscribers ;" and I am disposed to think that, as this is one of its fundamental rules, even an Act of Parliament could not be obtained to alter it. But to prove the entire fallacy of the excuse, let us look at the sister institution, "the Benevolent." It is managed by popular commercial men themselves, and *none but subscribers* are admitted ; and yet the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, M.P., said on December 28, 1883, that "he had been informed that 27,000 out of the 30,000 commercial travellers were not members of this institution." One is therefore forced to adopt the conclusion that it is not the rules of the "schools" which require altering, but the *indifference* of the travellers to a proper sense of their duty towards these two noble institutions—associations that any traveller should be proud to be a member of. For any man who is eligible to receive the benefits of either of them to say that he cannot afford to subscribe, is the poorest, not to



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THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SCHOOLS, PINNER.

say the most untruthful, of all excuses ; for one glass of grog per week less, and the thing is done ; and the man is better in health and in the consciousness of having performed his duty to himself, his family, and the great brotherhood of commercial travellers.

To ask our employers, or any one outside of our fraternity, for help, is, I say, most humiliating. Why ! if we were men and had any self-respect, any native dignity in our constitution, we should no longer permit the possibility of our widows and our children being paupers at the gate begging for a pittance. No ! we should at once rise to our full height, thank our benefactors for what they have done in the past, remove the disgrace by subscribing in sufficient numbers, and thus make our institutions self-supporting. This would be accomplished if only a third of our fraternity subscribed a guinea per annum to each of the institutions.

The idea of forming the Commercial Travellers' Schools originated with Mr. J. R. Cuffley, who was warmly supported by Mr. George Stockdale, Mr. Roberts, and a few other travellers. They called upon Mr. Moore, who at first doubted whether commercial travellers would combine for such an object. However, at the instance of Mr. Moore, these gentlemen collected £2000. Mr. Moore was now ready to go heartily with them. A public meeting was held at the London Tavern on the 30th December, 1845, George Moore in the chair. He was the first treasurer, and Mr. J. Masterman, M.P. for the

city of London, consented to be the president. From that time the success of the project became assured. The first premises for schools were at Wanstead. In 1847 the first twenty children were elected; in 1848, thirty more, and in 1849, ten more. The schools at Pinner were opened on the 27th October, 1855, Prince Albert being present. There were then 142 children in the schools. The Prince Consort gave 100 guineas, £2000 being in all collected. The schools cost £25,000. On the occasion of building an infirmary, swimming-bath, and laundry, and adding a new story to the main building, Mr. James Hughes, the present treasurer, occupied the chair at the annual dinner, supported by the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs; at which gathering Mr. Hughes was enabled to announce the largest amount ever collected at a charity dinner, viz., £17,000. This amount was raised principally by the untiring energy and herculean labours of Mr. Hughes, to whom, for help and sympathy in many other ways, we owe a deep debt of gratitude. His most recent, well-timed, and magnificent offer is, that if the commercial travellers will exert themselves and secure during the year 1885 a thousand new annual subscribers of a guinea each to the schools, he will supplement these subscriptions with a thousand guineas as a donation, or, in other words, Mr. Hughes will give a guinea himself for every guinea as a subscription, up to 1000 guineas.

I can further state that if any of my readers will make

an appointment with Mr. James Hughes (who visits the schools almost every Tuesday during the year), he will be pleased to see them at Pinner; and I may add that when once visited the cases are rare that an augmentation of its funds are not the result.

The following special information respecting our institutions will be found of interest:—

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SCHOOLS FOR ORPHAN AND NECESSITOUS CHILDREN (Founded A.D. 1845). *Patron*—H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. *Vice-Patron*—H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge. *President*—R. C. L. Bevan, Esq. *Trustees*—J. D. Allcroft, Esq., M.P., Alderman R. N. Fowler, Esq., John Baggallay, Esq. *Treasurer*—James Hughes, Esq. *Chairman of the Board of Management*.—D. R. Harvest, Esq. *Secretary*—Mr. Henry Lendon. *Head Master*—Mr. William Francis Richards. *Offices*—37, Milk Street, Cheapside, London, E.C.

The Institution next in age is that of which the following are useful particulars:—COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION FOR THE RELIEF OF AGED AND NECESSITOUS COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS, BEING MEMBERS, AND THE WIDOWS OF MEMBERS. *Offices*—47, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C. *Patrons*—George Burleigh, Esq., James Hughes, Esq., A. J. Lewis, Esq. *President*—Sir Sydney H. Waterlow, Bart., M.P. *Trustees*—T. F. Blackwell, Esq., J. N. Blyth, Esq., W. Harvey, Esq., W. Hudson, Esq. *Chairman of the Board of Management*—

T. Binsted, Esq. *Treasurer*—George Burleigh, Esq.
Secretary—Mr. Joseph Kaines.

The idea of founding this Institution occurred to Messrs. W. G. B. Gunton, H. Browning, J. W. Scott, S. Blankensee, and T. Smith, at Penzance, in September, 1849. It met with approval and goodwill from many old commercial travellers, as it was felt that there was much need for an Institution, the object of which should be “the establishment of a fund for the relief of necessitous commercial travellers, being members, who were aged, or incapacitated from earning a subsistence, and for their widows, and for no other purpose.” The words “Commercial Traveller” were to “be understood as describing such persons only on whose behalf satisfactory evidence should be offered to the Board of Management that they are employed in that capacity, and had travelled in the country for two years or more, and at least six months on an average in each year, &c.”

Qualification of Members.—A subscription of one guinea per annum or a donation of ten guineas; and any traveller having attained the age of fifty years must pay a donation of ten guineas or ten annual subscriptions to render himself or his widow eligible as a candidate for an annuity.

Special Relief Fund.—A Special Relief Fund has been established by T. Binsted, Esq., for the *temporary* relief of the more needy candidates waiting to be elected, for which subscriptions and donations (however small) are

earnestly solicited. The grants from this Fund have already been as gratefully received as they were urgently needed by candidates.

At the Annual Festival held at the Freemasons Tavern, 1884, N. R. H. Humphreys, Esq. (Chairman of Messrs. Bradbury, Greatorex, and Co., Limited), presided, and on proposing the toast of the evening, "Success to the Commercial Travellers' Institution," said that the Institution had started in the year 1849 with very small beginnings. It had achieved a success of which they might well feel proud, but with which he hoped they would not feel satisfied. By that he meant that they must not be satisfied until they were able to elect every eligible candidate. The affairs of the institution had been extremely well managed, and he thought they had shown much wisdom in not building an asylum. They had the satisfaction of knowing by the system they had adopted that every guinea subscribed, with but a fractional deduction for the expenses of management, went straight to the pockets of the pensioners. Besides, the family ties of the recipient were not broken. There was no degradation in receiving the annuity, because it was simply the reward of thrift in more prosperous times. The vicissitudes and changes of this life were so varied, that it was impossible for any man in flourishing circumstances to say what would happen in a few years hence. It was therefore incumbent upon every one to make some provision for the future. The subscribers to this

institution had the best possible insurance. No insurance office would guarantee that for less than one penny per working day a sum of £50 per annum would be paid in case of illness. One important point was, that out of 212 annuitants only twenty-five had been travellers, the remainder being widows of travellers. This showed the determination which the travellers had to work until the last, and not fall back upon the funds of the Institution until really obliged; then they had the comfort of knowing that a band of brothers and fellow-workers were ready and willing to assist them in their time of need. He would be very much disappointed if at that time next year he did not hear that each of the present subscribers had added another to the list."

A younger institution is that which will now be mentioned:—

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (Founded 1882). *President*—George Williams, Esq. *Ex-President*—Henry Lea, Esq. *Hon. Treasurer*—Mr. P. J. Whittaker. *Chairman of Committee*, 1885—Mr. Leonard Courtney. *Hon. Secretary*—Mr. Henry Holme. *General Secretary*—Mr. John Wells Thatcher.

Objects of the Association—1. The promotion of intercourse amongst Christian commercial Men. 2. The advancement of the moral and spiritual welfare of the entire body. 3. The placing of libraries of standard works in commercial rooms. 4. Placing copies of the Word of God in all hotel bedrooms. 5. Extending

sympathy and pecuniary help to commercial travellers (members and non-members) in *temporary need* through sickness or loss of employment.

Offices—186, Aldersgate Street, E.C.

Henry Lea, whose name is a household word amongst commercial travellers, was the first president. His name alone being a guarantee not only for the respectability but integrity of this or any association ; and there can be no doubt as to the broadness of its Christian charity, for it extends not only its sympathy but its pecuniary help to those who are *not* members. This is the test of all tests. I wish this same charity had been extended to the many libraries which the Committee have so generously supplied. They should have added books which would amuse and interest men who, after a hard day's work, are in no mood to study metaphysics, or read even so excellent a book as Motley's "Dutch Republic."¹

The Report for the year ending December, 1882, alludes to a further idea which the association was considering, namely, the establishment of a commercial travellers' paper advocating the claims of the association, and all other kindred societies for commercial travellers.

Early in 1883 the association appointed Mr. J. Wells Thatcher the editor, and his journalistic experience gave

¹ Since the above was written I have read in "On the Road" that the style of the volumes now supplied leaves little to be desired.

to the newspaper its proper literary tone. It is called "On the Road," and is published monthly, at a penny.

The last Annual Report of the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association (November 30, 1883) shows a membership of 2000. Ten thousand well-bound Bibles have been placed in as many commercial bedrooms; 140 libraries have been set up in the leading hotels at a cost of about £20 each. The total income for 1883 was £997 8s. 4d., and the balance at the same time was £226 17s. 6d., and all debts paid.

One of the most recent results of the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association is the founding of the **BRITISH COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' PROVIDENT SOCIETY**; the object of which is to make weekly payments to members in times of sickness, and to grant annuities. This new association is quite distinct from the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association, both as to its funds and management. The basis of the new society is that indicated by the Friendly Societies' Act, and it is in no sense a charitable institution. A member may receive from £1 to £3 a week during sickness, and the payment to be made to ensure any of these sums depends upon his age at time of entry.

Next in order comes the **UNITED KINGDOM COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION**. That the objects of this association shall be—To unite all gentlemen engaged in commercial travelling in a bond of union to advance their common interests; to secure to its members all rail-

way concessions, free legal assistance, and all other advantages which, by united action, can be more readily obtained, the question of the legal defence of any member being first approved at a special meeting of the Central Board or Local Committee. A commercial traveller shall mean a gentleman specially or chiefly engaged in representing any manufacturer, merchant, wholesale house, or company, for the purpose of securing orders and promoting business. Such definition shall not include those who are known as "specials," or occasional departmental men sent out on short, intermittent journeys, and whose special functions are those of warehousemen.

The above association, if properly worked, and the help of a few more influential, practical, and popular business men solicited, might become an association which has been wanted for a century. It has already secured "end of the week return tickets" at single fares from the Great Eastern and Great Northern Railways. B. Foster MacGeach, Esq., J.P., an old traveller, and at the head of the Fosters Parcels and Express Company, is the president. This gentleman's intimate knowledge of the railways has already proved of so much advantage. Mr. J. W. Thatcher is the founder; he also is a man who has been a commercial traveller, and who enters into his work with a zeal and a knowledge of our wants which ought to be a source of benefit to our fraternity.

The association has already the following representatives:—Alderman Thomas Witty, Chairman Hull and

District Branch; Mr. John Clark, Vice-Chairman Hull and District Branch; Mr. Thomas Cummings, Chairman Glasgow Branch; Mr. James Couper, Hon. Treasurer Glasgow Branch; Mr. J. W. Davis, Chairman Bristol Branch; Mr. F. F. Sully, Vice-Chairman Bristol Branch; Councillor John Barker Ellis, Chairman Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch; Mr. George Harrison, jun., Chairman Edinburgh and Leith Branch; Mr. David Macfarlane, Treasurer Edinburgh and Leith Branch. Branches also are started in Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool.

Hon. Secretaries — Mr. George Mahaffy, London Branch (Parent Society); Mr. F. Ingham, Hull Branch; Mr. William R. Bogle, Glasgow Branch; Mr. John Withers, Bristol Branch; Mr. George Watson, Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch; Mr. John R. Russell, Edinburgh and Leith Branch. Each of the branches has a powerful committee of from twenty to thirty members, and the construction of the Central Board will require modification as the association develops. *Gen. Hon. Sec.*, Mr. Thomas Fawcett.

The following societies are also established for the benefit of commercial travellers :—

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.—From the report by Mr. J. C. Reid, C.A., Secretary, 48 new members have been enrolled during the year 1885, 17 have died, and the number of members at close of year was 1383. The expected number of deaths was 23·885. One deceased member drew 430

weeks' aliment, two upwards of 300 each, one 90 weeks', the remainder in smaller proportions; while in one case, during a membership of over 40 years, no sickness has been recorded. The sickness experienced cost £2,665, while the amount expected was £2,065. The funds of the society have been increased during the year by the sum of £1,894 15s. 11d. The total funds now amount to £47,610 16s. 4d., the annual revenue to £5,108 16s. 4d., while the money paid to the members amounts to £48,114 10s. 10d. The figures fairly show the strength of the society, and the large amount of relief for which it has provided. Each member is urged to further the interest of the society on all proper occasions. It has always to be noted that the institution has stood the test of nearly half a century, and that it is more vigorous with each advancing year, so the public may join its ranks with the utmost confidence, the large sums distributed being a warrant that it supplies a solid want. From Mr. Arthur's gift and the members' fund for widows, the directors were enabled to allocate allowances to four applicants—two of £22 9s. each, and two of £12 10s. each. The report was approved of, and office-bearers thereafter elected, those for 1884 being:—*President*—John Couper (Mann, Byars, and Co.); *Vice-President*—David Mitchell, 51, Miller Street; *Treasurer*—Robert Gourlay, banker; *Secretary*—John C. Reid, C.A. *Directors*—James Irons, J. Bannerman, William Gibson, Alex. Smith, Alex. Campbell,

Wemyss Walls, John Morison, Alex. Dunbar, Jervis Coats, jun., A. Mellish, Gilbert Innes, Wm. Connell. *Surgeon*—Professor Wm. Leishman, M.D.; *Actuary*, Thos. Marr, F.I.A.; *Law Agents*—M'Grigor, Donald, and Co.—*Glasgow Mail*.

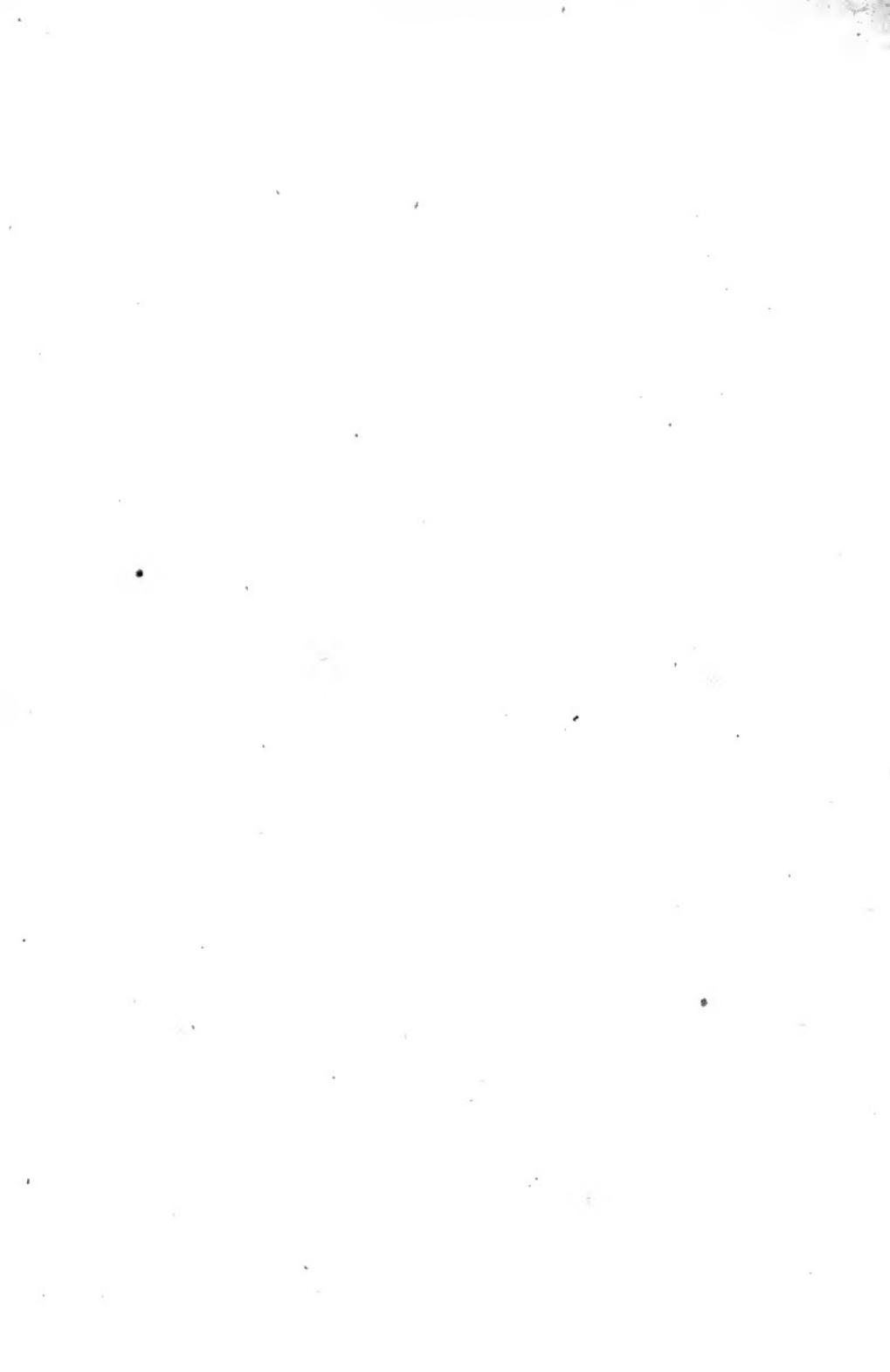
THE NORTH OF ENGLAND COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION. *President*—Mr. William Slaughter; *Treasurer*—Mr. W. Murton. The Secretary (Mr. G. A. Allan) says in his report, 1883: "The number of our ordinary members at the beginning of the year was 158, not 164, as stated in last year's report. Seven have left the association or been reluctantly struck off for not complying with Rule 3 of the association; 16 new members have joined during the year: so that the number now stands at 167. We numbered 91 honorary members at the beginning of the year; 5 have been removed by death or other causes; 4 joined us during the year, but one of the four, we are sorry to say, died during the year—we allude to the late Sheriff of Newcastle—so that our number of honorary members now stands at 89. A great number of names have been proposed for membership during the year, but, for some cause, they have not come forward and joined us. Our income for the year 1883 has been, from all sources, £370 9s. 10d., as against the sum of £366 13s. 9d. for the year 1882. The increase is small, but it is consoling to know there is an increase. The expenditure for the year is the most favourable item, £181 17s. 1d.,

which includes the £25 paid to annuitant, and also £9 13s. 9d. loss at the concert, being an increase of 16s. 4d. over 1882. The disbursements in benefits to members have been exactly the same as last year, viz., £37, £15 of which was paid to one member who had the misfortune to have his leg broken: so that there has only been £24 paid for actual sickness, which we think speaks well for the healthiness of commercial men as a body, seeing that disease has been so rampant in our midst. We are very happy to be able to say the same as was said last year, that the interest received from funds invested has been more than sufficient to pay sick benefits and the annuity as well. Your committee are very happy to be able to state that there have not been any deaths among our members during the year, an immunity which has not occurred to us for the last nine years; and we wish hereby to record our heartfelt gratitude to the Great Architect of the universe for His great goodness to us. It will thus be seen that the excess of revenue over expenditure for the year has been £188 12s. 9d. The total value of your association, as represented at the end of the year, was £1,760 14s., of which £1,700 is placed in approved security, and £60 14s. 4d. remains deposited with your bankers.

NORTH AND WEST OF IRELAND COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION.—The objects of this useful association are to protect the interests of commercial travellers, to raise funds for the assistance of widows and

orphans of members, and to provide legal and educational aid. The annual subscription is 10s. The sick fund grants £1 per week for twelve months to all members enrolled for two years, and who pay £1 per annum additional subscription. The report contains one schedule of recommendations to hotel proprietors, and one to members. Both are very emphatic as to what should be expected at the hands of the proprietors of hotels. The actual receipts of 1883 were £264 2s. 8½d., of which amount £102 represented 204 subscriptions. There was a balance in hand at commencement of the year, amounting to £669 10s. 1½d., and £20 1s. 9d. was received for interest. These sums bring the cash available up to £935 14s. 8d. The benevolent grant made amounted to £115; general expenses, £72 19s. 11d.; cash in bank, £63; Government Stock, £702 14s. 9d. *President*—Mr. John M'Vea; *Vice-President*—Mr. E. Donaghy; *Treasurer*—Mr. James M'Cardle; *Hon. Secs.*—Messrs. Thomas Scott and Samuel Entrican; *Secretary*—Mr. W. M. Johnson, 3, Hampton Terrace, Belfast.





TOWN TRAVELLING.

“I do not think that in any capital in Europe—and I am acquainted with most of them—there could be found a more eminently respectable set of business men, or a sharper class of dealers in merchandize.”—“ONE OF THE CROWD,” *The Daily Telegraph*.



CHAPTER X.

Town Travelling.

IN 1826 it was evident that Messrs. Fisher, Stroud, & Robinson, for whom George Moore travelled, considered that it required a more talented traveller for the large towns in the provinces than it did for London ; hence their remark that "George" was "too good for town travelling." Whatever may have been the difference then, there is now but little, if any. For both town and country travellers, to be successful, must be men of undoubted ability, unswerving honesty, good judgment, great tact, and determined perseverance. The two best men whom I have recently known, returned over a thousand pounds a week all the year round. One of them, a town traveller, represented B. G., and Co., and the other, a country traveller, represented J. H., and Co. Both of these men were blessed with herculean strength and

endurance—Napoleons of the road. It must not be understood that so gigantic a return was made by the actual sales of the individual man without supplementary aid, for this would be impossible; it would be more than poor flesh and blood could sustain. They secured the assistance of special department men in obtaining large season orders, and goods purchased by customers in the warehouse, who were influenced by them to go to their respective houses rather than elsewhere. Many customers, knowing little of the firm, but much of the traveller, often follow him if he exchanges employers; others visit the markets weekly, and will do nothing with travellers. Of course, the tradesmen who make their purchases of the representatives must be “decent fellows.”

Comparing once more the town and country man. I should say that the average return of the latter is heavier in amount, and that the town man’s ability does not differ in degree so much as in kind. It has been said that cities have been the cradles of human liberty, and that the great agency in calling forth a man’s capabilities, whether for good or for evil, is contact with our fellow man. The picturesque may be with the country, but the intellectual, speaking generally, is with the town. This applies to the business man and the traveller. You get smarter and keener-witted travellers in London than in the provinces. As a country traveller (and I doubt not but that it is the experience of others), it always did me good to run up to the warehouse for a day or so to brush

against the quick-brained men and the rapid movement and bustle of town warehouse life. It always proved an inspiration to myself. The city men seemed to have a reserve of "bottled lightning" always in hand, and have the faculty of charging other men who have the capacity to receive it (some have not), and they impart it to their customers in the country. I have heard it again and again said, "So-and-so is advised: he will wake the guv'nor up and put him into better humour!"

George A. Sala facetiously writes of the citizens of London as follows: "There are some of those gay clerks who go down to their offices with roses in their buttonholes and with cigars in their mouths; there are some who wear peg-top trousers, chin tufts, eye-glasses, and varnished boots. I observe—to return to the clerks who are wending their way citywards—that the most luxuriant whiskers belong to the Bank of England; I believe that there are whisker clubs in that great national institution, where prizes are given for the best pair of *favoris* grown without macassar. You may, as a general rule, distinguish government from commercial clerks by the stern repudiation of the razor, as applied to the beard and moustaches by the former; and again I may remark that the prize for the thinnest and most dandy-looking umbrellas must be awarded, as of right, to the clerks in the East India House—mostly themselves slim, natty gentlemen of jaunty appearance, who are all supposed to have had tender affairs with the widows of East India colonels."

You may know the cashiers in the private banking-houses by their white hats and buff waistcoats. You may know the stockbrokers by their careering up Ludgate Hill in dog-carts and occasionally tandems, and by the pervading sporting appearance of their costume ; you may know the Jewish commission agents by their flashy broughams with lapdogs and ladies in crinolines beside them ; you may know the sugar bakers and the soap boilers by the comfortable double-bodied carriages with fat horses in which they roll along ; you may know the Manchester and dry goods warehousemen by their wearing gaiters—always carrying their hands in their pockets and frequently slipping into recondite city taverns, up darksome alleys, on their way to Cheapside, to make a quiet bet or so, on the Chester Cup, or the Liverpool Steeplechase. You may know, finally, the men with a million of money, or thereabouts, by their being ordinarily dressed very shabbily, and by their wearing shocking bad hats (which have seemingly never been brushed) on the back of their heads.” This was written more than twenty years ago. Twenty-five years ago, the principals of a firm I know very well would not allow a man in their employ to cultivate a moustache, and our senior partner made his son, an officer in the army, shave his upper lip when he was on leave, at home—adding the remark that when he was in civilized society he must follow civilized rule. Many of my readers will remember the skit which appeared in *Punch* at the time when Messrs. Copestakes

had requested all their *employés* to shave the upper lip, for this powerful firm added a terrible rider to their order, it was to the effect that those who did not comply must seek fresh fields for their business abilities and their moustache. I was one of the first in our own house who dared to appear with one. I remember going home from my first country journey with a moustache, and was told by one of the firm not to let the senior partner see me. This was in 1862. One can hardly believe that such arbitrary rules were enforced. In our large northern towns one observes more liberty, larger ideas, broader sympathies, and more rapid reforms. Dr. Laird Collier, who was secretary of the Chicago Relief Fund after the great fire, told me that he considered it one of the sights of London to stand near the Bank of England and see, from 8.30 to 10 a.m. the thousands of young men pour into the city by omnibus and by rail, well dressed, kid gloved, silk umbrella-ed, black silk hatted, smart, clean-looking, intelligent men, with more of the appearance of well-to-do professional gentlemen than men connected with commerce. The country men of business compare most favourably with what I have written, especially the country commercial traveller, for although not so smart a body of men, they have "more grit," to use an American expression, more depth. The pure cockney type is superficial. He has more dash than the country traveller, but not the staying power; more gush but less ballast; more effervescent and frothy; more "Frenchy;" takes

his orders by dashing and storming the citadel ; but the man of the provinces is more of a steady plodder, less brilliant, but having a good constitution and magnificent physique, more reserve force and reflective power, whereas the pure cockney's whole life-education, and pre-natal as well, has prepared him to live more by his wits from day to day. Both can labour : the town man wants immediate results, and is querulous and dissatisfied if he does not get his rapidly grown mushroom. The provincial traveller is naturally slower and does the digging, the sowing, the harrowing, the weeding, the watching, and the waiting, but he usually gathers a good harvest. Both types are very much the creatures of certain sets of circumstances. We cannot, if we would, relieve ourselves of our past and present environments. Some live in a whirlpool of commercial excitement, and are rushed through the world in our largest cities ; others exist, or, rather, vegetate in placid villages or country towns, where, save on the market day, or on a Saturday evening, there is not even a ripple to disturb the quiet calm of the smooth business stream. We are all more or less dragged down to the level of our surroundings or raised to a higher platform by the wholesome friction with brighter souls. If an unusually bright country lad—which is often the case—catches the inspiration of the city man, he has a combination of forces that will make him invaluable to his employers and lift him to certain success. The enormous advantages which a town traveller has



AMBASSADORS OF COMMERCE.

"THE GRAND SEIGNEUR" (TOWN TRAVELLER).

over a country representative is that the number of customers he can see in a day, if he only properly applies himself, is practically unlimited.

It is now, I believe, generally admitted that, other things being equal, the traveller's position is most sought after by men of position in the departments. I have known well-paid buyers apply for town travellers' berths. A traveller is more his own master and freer in all respects, has less responsibility, is not always under the immediate eye of the firm, has no large stock to trouble him, or the rapid change of fashions to distract him. If a town ambassador has the tact, talent, and application to secure daily a fair amount of business with the present mode of travelling which the best drapery houses provide, he has by far the best berth in the ship.

The town travellers, I am aware, argue that the purchases of London retail men are much smaller than those of the provinces, and that their friends are so near the market that travellers are not so necessary ; this I admit, but they can call upon many more customers per day. The town traveller is not in a railway carriage two, three, and four hours at a stretch, he is not in a small town where, if he misses one train, there is not another until the entire day has gone. He has no market days, fair days, flower shows, fêtes, half holidays in the middle of the week, agricultural shows, and so on. If a town client does often go into the city for a special matching line, or to secure the first pick of some new, fashionable article,

it is in the morning, and the traveller often catches him in the afternoon or evening. It is a notorious fact that town buyers rush through the city warehouses, barely giving themselves time to look at their purchases ; and why? because their time is of so much value to them at home. They select fancy goods, and give their orders for plain goods and their season's parcels to travellers who are "decent fellows." One thing is certain, that both town and country buyers are more alive to the great practical lesson, which they have been some time in learning, viz., of keeping much smaller stocks, buying from hand to mouth, allowing the warehousemen to keep stocks for them from which they can hourly replenish by the aid of the telephone, halfpenny cards, the parcel post, &c. They are compelled to do this by sheer force of circumstances.

During the last twenty years the entire system of business has undergone a radical change amounting to a revolution. The era of large profits and big dividends is over, and woe to the retail or the wholesale buyers who do not see the sign of the commercial times, and conduct their business in sympathy with it. The only chance nowadays to make money is in the rapid and continuous turning over of the stock. Nimble six-pences are better than slow shillings. Small profits and quick returns are commercial adages which were never so important to be remembered and religiously practised ; if not there will be little or no profit for the retail man, and

no dividend for the wholesale shareholder. Good management in all the details is also most essential. There never was a time in the history of commerce when good practical men at the head of large firms were so necessary, and when judicious management goes for so much. The cue for all travellers, especially for town men, is that the multiplicity of small orders is *the* order of the day. The mode of town travelling has much improved, and has materially assisted the traveller in town to adapt himself to the new state of things. "One of the Crowd," a very graphic and intelligent journalist, speaking of town travellers, says : "Another class, quite a higher grade, may be seen any morning as one enters the city, issuing from Cheapside or the adjacent streets, on the top of vehicles, which sometimes bear a painful resemblance to hearses, and sometimes to travelling showmen's cars. There is another class of more desirable carriages, closed up, it is true, with the traveller and his driver seated in front, but still more presentable vehicles, lighter and less dismal in appearance. But they are by no means the aristocracy of the trade. They, indeed, have their lines cast in exceedingly pleasant places. They ride in a brougham, sometimes enveloped in boxes, but frequently with only a small satchel by their side, and a liveried servant on the box. To these belong a certain potentiality of respectability, such as a man who carries his goods in his pocket, on his back, or in his hands cannot easily aspire to. They are the very top of their

profession—notables in the trade, head men of the clan, chiefs, grand seigneurs. . . . They make comparatively few complaints. Trade may be good or bad, but their knowledge or their skill surmounts every obstacle, and they contrive each night as they send in an order-sheet to the house to which they belong, to place upon it satisfactory commands, even though the whole market be down.” I can fully endorse these remarks, for one hears few complaints from good salesmen. They are usually too busy to find time for grumbling, and certain travellers of my acquaintance, with whom I have again and again compared notes, have often been doing an increasing business when the majority of travellers have been trade-sick, or groaning with commercial dyspepsia. The truth is, that the commercial traveller, and especially the town representative, is more absolutely the pioneer of his own fortune than any other class of men engaged in commerce. *Ergo*, he has no one but himself to blame if he does not attain to more than the average of success. A sterling fellow laughs at impossibilities, and says, “It shall be done!” He argues, “I am in as good form as Mr. A., physically and mentally. I have been as well educated. I have been through a retail apprenticeship. I have had several years’ experience of the wholesale trade, and therefore, being his equal in so many respects, what reason is there that I should not be his equal also in doing a business.” Few men having this faith in themselves miss the mark. On the contrary, the half-

hearted croaker, the perpetual grumbler, does no good for himself. He depresses and discounts other men's enthusiasm. I would any day sooner meet the —, well the Angel Gabriel himself, than the commercial who is known as the habitual growler, the "tear 'em" of the road. It is impossible for the town traveller, or any other man, if he be of this type, to be successful, for he dries up the very springs that would yield him a supply. He kills the goose that would have laid him the golden egg ; he nips up, with his bitter east wind, the germ of an order sprouting in his customer's breast. Poor deluded fellow ! he does not know his commercial alphabet ; he has mistaken his calling. He is a round man in a square hole. He ought to be packing the goods sold by better men, not attempting to sell them himself.

There are a few similar men, proprietors of retail establishments, who are unable to estimate at their proper value the services of the commercial gentlemen who call upon them—men who may be in most respects their equals, or even their superiors, and who address them in a courteous, respectful manner, but who receive in return not only a cold, haughty, ignorant reception, but in many instances, uncivilized, brutish treatment. Councillor George White, of Norwich, knew this to be the case. He an old commercial traveller, and friend of the writer's, a partner in one of the largest and most enterprising concerns in the Eastern Counties, said at a public dinner in

aid of the Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Institution : "Looking back for some years, he remembered the time when he should not have been classed as a visitor, for he served nearly an apprenticeship upon the road, and therefore he had a brotherly feeling with the majority of those he was addressing. The experience gained on the road was of very great service to business men. He looked back with great satisfaction to the time when he was privileged to dwell amongst the commercial travellers and to gain an amount of experience which had, he believed, been of much service to him subsequently. In another way it was well that business men should have some experience of the road. They would then know how to treat a commercial man when he called upon them—they would be careful not to waste his time, and would be civil and polite to him when he was endeavouring to do his best for his employer. That consideration was not found among some of the trading community."

I have spoken of the bilious commercial, "One of the Crowd" shall give my readers an illustration of him :

"You have no idea what an awful job it is to sell things nowadays compared with what one used to find only a very few years ago," said a somewhat discontented member of the fraternity to me. "You drive up to the door of a shop, and perhaps find four or five other traps there before you. If you get down and go inside you find four or five other men with precisely the

same description of goods as yourself, all waiting to take a turn at the shopkeeper. Very likely he happens to be busy. Of course no man keeps more hands in his shop than he is obliged to, and if it is not a very large establishment the master is engaged just as hard as the men in trying to push his business. The very last person in the world that he wants to see is a commercial traveller, and yet he is pestered by them half a dozen at a time. If there were only one he would not be inclined to refuse to look at his stuff, but with six all in a row he is much more ready to order them all out of the shop than to hear a word of what they have to say. Yet not one of the six likes to go and leave the field open to the others, and all the time the day is slipping away and other places have to be gone to, many of which will be found assailed in the same fashion when they are reached, and yet the order-sheet has to be filled up somehow or other. That is not exactly the kind of life to long for. Why, I have rebuffs enough to make a man mad in the course of a day sometimes ; then, having done my utmost, have returned to the warehouse to get well wigged there for not having obtained more orders. Pray don't fancy that a town traveller's life is all honey. If you tried it for about a fortnight I think you would find that you had had enough of it."

Poor fellow. "One of six that does not like to go away!" He should have started an hour earlier in the morning, and kept well ahead of his opponents, and

then they would have waited, not he. For it does not pay to wait outside and feel “all the time is slipping away.” If time is money to any one it is to the traveller, and he does not make the best use of it for himself and his employers by kicking his heels outside the shop-doors; but by getting inside *early*, not wasting the buyer’s precious moments by unnecessary jargon. The best and smartest men, like the two mentioned at the commencement of this chapter, are out early in the morning. One hour to the commercial before midday is what one hour before midnight is to the sleeper—worth two hours afterwards.

The following represents a good, sound, plucky traveller—an opponent not to be despised.

“Said one of the gentlemen whose acquaintance I happened to make. ‘Town travellers nowadays have to use all their wits to get along, but, as in every other kind of life, the best men succeed the most. Competition is so tremendously severe! I travel in ready-made costumes. My house is one of the best in London, and I am able to offer the very finest articles at prices that you would think must defy competition. But the fact is, I find myself rivalled by quite eight or ten other men, some of whom make it their business to undersell me even at a loss, in hopes of getting me eventually out of the trade. The dresses that I take,’ said he, showing me some marvellously pretty styles of female apparel, ‘are about the prettiest that can possibly be designed.

You have no idea of the pains that are taken to get these things up. Our buyers are, I believe, the best to be found. They ought to be pretty good men, for they are well paid. And yet I have all I can do to send in a good order-sheet at night. Sometimes I am lucky and get a good line ; sometimes I find myself blocked wherever I go. On the whole, I managed to keep up my returns pretty well even in the dull times we have gone through, but that was by working like a slave. It is true I am not very badly paid. With salary and commission, and a certain allowance for expenses, I manage to get from £300 to £350 a year, but then I have to work for it. Have I found it useful to be a Freemason ? Yes, occasionally. Some customers who would scarcely look at what I have got to sell are very good friends of mine because I belong to the craft, and give me a line sometimes when they might not otherwise do so. But I fancy I get on as I do—and I have done pretty well—simply because I am obliging and my house is prompt. If I give my word that an order shall be executed in a certain time, my client knows that it will be done.' A brisk and evidently exceedingly sharp business-like man.

Again : “‘I am rather young at the trade,’ said one of the town traveller toilers to me, as we talked over the subject of his employment. ‘It is not very long since I was a salesman in a wholesale house. I did not particularly like the buyers—long hours, the somewhat overbearing conduct of the heads of departments and the

buyers, and the confinement of the warehouse, made me anxious to get out of doors. I applied to the partners of the firm for a berth as town traveller, and as I had done rather well as a salesman in the warehouse, and there happened just then to be a vacancy that they thought would suit me, I got the berth. I started of course on a low salary, one per cent. commission on the business I should do, and a small sum a day allowed me for expenses. They gave me a horse and trap, and a boy to drive it. Of course I knew I could not long keep the berth if I did not get orders, so I worked as hard as it was possible to do. Very fortunately for me, the man whom I succeeded had been lazy, and I fancy a little disagreeable to the clients. That perhaps accounted for my success. Any way, I more than doubled the orders he got, getting some capital lines from houses that would not look on our stuff before, and since then I have had my salary increased, and I am doing pretty well. I am on good terms with most of my customers, and I mean to keep so.' As I looked at this quick, hopeful young traveller it certainly seemed to me that, having got his foot on the lower rungs of the ladder, he would be likely before very long to rise to the top."

I have quoted at some length from "One of the Crowd" to give my readers an opportunity of seeing how an unbiassed outsider has corroborated all that I have advanced, and I conclude with his words:

"From time immemorial a certain halo of romance

and interest has hung round the commercial traveller. In the East the stories of his caravans and his adventures have formed the subject of a thousand tales. In the West his enterprise, ingenuity, and energy have contributed, perhaps more than anything else, to the spread of civilization and desirable habits. In England we have been accustomed to associate the commercial traveller with a peculiarly happy and fortunate life, full of enjoyment, fairly free from cares, and well furnished with pleasant excitement.

“It was clear that in very many cases the town travellers were an exceedingly well-to-do sort of men. Of their keenness, their capacity for business, and their excellent appreciation of what was needed by the public, it is impossible to speak in too high terms.”



MEN WITH AND MEN WITHOUT AN IDEAL.

“He aims too low who aims beneath the sky.”



CHAPTER XI.

Men with and Men without an Ideal.

A YOUTH who for the first time was about to start on a country journey for one of the largest London drapery warehouses, was asked by the senior member of the firm if he had confidence in what he was about to undertake. "Certainly," said the young man; "I have been taught that 'he aims too low who aims beneath the sky.'" The old gentleman remarked, "Take care, sir; take care that you don't aim beyond the sky." This is quite possible, and is as useless as aiming at the solid earth. All thoughtful men picture to themselves several possible courses. One aims at a bush, and is satisfied if he kills a hedge-sparrow; another at a tree, and considers it a distinguished feat if he bags a rook or two. Another is a genuine sportsman, and aspires to game swift on the wing in the open field. And yet another is

unsatisfied unless an eagle is dead at his feet. There are many who shoot at random beyond the sky, altogether quixotic in their ideas, often shooting themselves. These individuals should not be trusted with even a pop-gun. This homely illustration represents some with an average aim in life, some above the average ; others with the very highest, and those with no ideal whatever. The latter are mere machines driven at will by men *with* ideas. For

“This proverb’s true on every soil—
The men who think shall govern those who toil.”

John Bright in his haste once said that the world was made up of knaves and fools, and that the knaves lived on and out of the fools. This, although there may be a modicum of truth in it, is much too sweeping an assertion, and I think even John Bright himself would now mix such a sentiment *cum grano salis*. Neither does one believe in Carlyle’s blunt dyspeptic cynicism when he would have us believe “that there are 30,000,000 souls in these islands, mostly fools.” These are extremes that all who can lay claim to thought and feeling must deprecate ; but it would be equally idle to ignore the fact that there are thousands of very ignorant and stupid people in existence. Hence the common remark, “What a foolish fellow So-and-so is ! Whatever possessed him to do this, that, or the other ! He must have lost his level head !” “How stupid some people are ! I cannot

understand what some people are made of!" "He seems to be without an idea!" But such is life, and so much the better for the cleverer ones, those who have an idea or two in their heads, an aim, and a plan of life. For if there were no stupid, thoughtless persons, there would be less chance for the steady, industrious, energetic, shrewd ones. The simple explanation is, that one part of mankind is reflective, the other part not so. Longfellow aptly supplies us with a couplet which vividly illustrates this principle :

" Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife,"

thus dividing humanity into two classes, the drivers and the driven; or, in other words, men with and those without an ideal or standard. There are those with an aim, a plan, a guiding principle, something worth living and working for; and there are the mere, useless creatures, *sans* aim, *sans* idea, *sans* hope. I am reminded that Tennyson sings, "That nothing moves with aimless feet." Perhaps not. A poet should always be more and see further than a prosy business man. But I am free to confess that I fail to see what many are aiming at, except it be the destruction of all that is noble and beautiful in their own natures. Darwin has lifted the veil which ignorance had woven over the retiring earth-worm, and he has shown us what a magnificent, unconscious agriculturist it has been for millions of years, and

how it has prepared this planet for the better service of the world's population. But I think it would require a greater mind than that of a Darwin to inform us what really good use some men and women are to themselves or to any one else.

It being impossible to make progress but at the command of mind, pictures must be photographed on the mind before thought can be embodied in action. Varied in design and value they may be ; some very poor indeed, but the most insignificant better than none at all ; others great in conception, original and masterly in detail and colouring. Apply this to the subject in hand, what do we observe ? Numbers of business men leaving their schools and homes for their venture in the wide world : some minus the semblance even of an idea—"Come day, go day, God send Sunday" sort of folk, who eat, drink, sleep, and smoke, doing the little they do in the most mechanical and perfunctory manner. Year in and year out they do exactly what they are told, and not a particle more. Easily satisfied souls : no ambition, no spirit of emulation, no movement, no growth. You leave them in a certain situation ; return in twenty or thirty years after having gone round the entire globe, made a fortune, married a wife, reared and educated a family, been Lord Mayor of London, M.P. for the city, &c., and you find your fellow-apprentice, John, still drudging behind the counter, dressed in the same shaped clothes, speaking the same broad provincial dialect, a quiet unobtrusive

creature, who reads the weekly local, goes to church on Sunday, sings a song occasionally at the village inn—"It was grandfather's custom and so it shall be mine"—smokes a long clay pipe, and drinks very small beer. He is perfectly happy, and cannot understand what you or any one else can have or desire beside. His standard of life is a low one, and is reached without thought or effort. Look at a contrast in his friend. He was a brother apprentice, and, in every respect save one, commenced his career on equal terms. Their homes were similar, their parents business folk. Each of the lads moved in the same grade of society, and were educated at the same school by the same masters. What then was it which widened the gulf between them? It was simply the advantage in the one case of having an incentive in the shape of a motive, an idea; to be and do something more than his parents in the world, a justifiable, legitimate ambition. He read, thought, observed; in common parlance, put two and two together and made thoughtful and definite resolves and plans, that as soon as his apprenticeship was over he would go where he could see more business, have more scope for his energies, that he would take his talents to the best market. He is told on leaving that if he only makes as good a man as his master he will do well. His reply is, that if his master has taught him all he (the master) knows, he is a poor fool if he does not know something himself, and therefore hopes to make a better man than

his master. He reads that admirable book, "The Successful Merchant," Smiles's "Self Help," and others of a similar character, and keeps a sharp look out on all that is hourly occurring around him; absorbs inspiration from all quarters as "Joey Ladle" did, even at the pores. It is marvellous what an amount of mental food a young intelligent fellow can take in in a few years in our larger cities, consciously and unconsciously, if he only keep his eyes and ears well open. This inspiration impels him onward, takes possession of him, and never leaves him day nor night. He naturally begins to feel, after some two or three years in his first situation, that he has absorbed nearly all the knowledge he can obtain there; and true power of this kind only makes him thirst for more; and as all turnpikes lead to London, so does all genuine desire for information lead to the great centres of intelligence, where it can be most easily and abundantly gratified. So our young friend comes to town; and after repeated calls at some of the largest warehouses—early in the morning—plainly but well dressed, clean, smart, and fresh (without a walking-stick), beaming with intelligence, he is engaged by a Wood Street firm. Five-and-twenty years from that day he is a knighted sheriff of London, and, speaking to an audience of young men, he tells them the sense of what I have already related, and, in addition, the following :

"I came to London with a very few pounds in my pocket; *I made up my mind* to get into the very best

house ; and when I did get in *to make myself of so much value to my employers that they could not do without me.*" Mark well the secret of his success. He determined to do something, and that something was not quixotic ; it was, as I have said, to make himself, by punctuality, by attention to all the small rules and regulations of the concern, by cleanliness, honesty, respectful obedience to his superior officers, and by incessant application, a power in the business : thus to gain the confidence of those above him and of his employers, so that he becomes a necessity to them. So much was this the case, that a partnership was offered and accepted. Any man with tact and application will, other things being equal, always be able to reach a certain altitude of success in the commercial world ; *but the eminence attained will always depend and be in proportion to a previously conceived ideal based on a man's convictions and ability to estimate himself at his true value.*

That a man should know himself thoroughly and only accept positions that knowledge and experience have educated him for is most essential. For if he has false notions of his own value, failure is certain. I am disposed to think that many fail from underrating *themselves* and so lose ground, allowing others of less intrinsic worth but more confidence (I was going to say impudence) to march before them. Want of confidence is certainly not one of the failings of an accomplished commercial traveller : in fact, it is this confidence in himself and in the

prestige of his house, based on rectitude and on goods of sterling value, that is his strength. Further, I am of opinion from some considerable experience, that a traveller's sales will be much about what his preconceived notion of what they should be ; and there is scarcely a limit to the amount if the ambassador's idea is but a high one. "He aims too low who aims beneath the sky," I repeat. It is imperative to keep on aiming upwards, as the result must be in proportion to the object aimed at : hence the well-known figures attained by different men, one man with a high ideal doing treble the amount of business over a poorer ground, done by another whose standard is a low one. "According to thy faith" is as applicable to business as it is to ethics ; and a constant application to doing an honest day's work is as necessary to morals as it is to making a fortune.



OUR COLONIAL TRAVELLERS AND THE
AMERICAN "DRUMMER."

“The English trade does not exist for the exportation of native products, but on its manufactures, or the making well everything which is ill made elsewhere. They make pouches for the Mexican, bandanas for the Hindoo, Ginsing for the Chinese, beads for the Indians, laces for the Flemings, telescopes for astronomers, cannon for kings.”

EMERSON.

“Commerce is a foreign policy in itself.”

LORD ROSEBERY.



CHAPTER XII.

Our Colonial Travellers and the American “Drummer.”

HER Majesty, it has been said, was once asked by one of her Indian subjects to what she attributed England's greatness. She unhesitatingly replied, “The Bible.” Others tell us it was due to our great generals and brave soldiers, our mighty men of war, the wooden walls of old England, Nelson and his intrepid sailors, who never knew when they were beaten. These have doubtless been some of the means which have helped to make us a great nation, but this is only part of the reason; we must go deeper than this. That principle which Emerson designates the “genius of business,” which has made of us “a nation of shopkeepers” on the one hand, has in a wider sense made us rulers of the fifth part of the globe's population. The peoples now speaking the English language are over 100,000,000.

It is our trading ability that has made us so great a colonizing power. As early as the Conquest it has been remarked, in explanation of the wealth of England, "that its merchants trade to all countries." Our insular position accustomed us to a seafaring life. The very smallness of our island home and the few luxuries nature produced here tempted our forefathers to visit more genial climes, and to exchange our manufactured goods for the produce of the tropics and every other land. To do this, travellers were a necessity long before Sir Walter Raleigh brought us the necessary potato and the soothing tobacco. So that I can claim for the fraternity to which I belong, and for the first commercial traveller who exchanged a metal button for an elephant's tusk, the credit in no small degree of adding to the great wealth of the greatest nation the world has ever seen ; and to which every man at home, in our colonies, and in our great Indian empire, is proud to belong. To quote the words of Pope :

"Let India boast her palms, nor envy we
The weeping amber nor the spicy tree ;
While by our oaks these precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn."

Great generals and mighty admirals have done wonders in making our power felt the wide world over; but where did the sinews of war come from? Who paid the income-tax? Why, the trading community, the great middle class who are the vertebral column of the empire. Commercial travellers were the pioneers of this business

wealth which has proved such an enormous civilizing force; for it has become a truism that just in proportion to the trade influence and interest you can bring to bear upon the nations of the earth, do you lessen the chances of war. Of course there are a few mercenary men interested in chemicals and war materials, and others who would indirectly "feather their nests" by war, but the great bulk of the manufacturers, merchants, and shopkeepers would be enormous losers. Many might for a short time get higher prices for their present stocks, but sooner or later the crash would come, reducing the early gains to less than the average profits of peaceful times. So that we commercial travellers pride ourselves in not only establishing in a large degree the commerce which has grown to such gigantic results, but in its indirect influence proving one of the greatest if not the supreme civilizing power and the chief neutralizer of war. We commence with beads and trinkets, and end with bales of calicos and woollen goods, steel rails and locomotives—too often, I admit, with the intermediate fire-arms and "Old Tom."

"For many centuries England has taken the lead amongst the nations of the earth in commerce. At the beginning of the present century, when Australia and New Zealand were practically unknown, when the great cities of the United States were many of them not in existence, when the trade of the world with the far East was carried round the Cape of Good Hope, the total

amount of imports and exports were little more than seventy millions. In half a century—in the year 1845—it rises to 250,000,000. The year that brought the repeal of the corn laws, when the shackles that bound commerce were burst asunder and struck away, it again rose to three hundred and fifty millions; and when free trade was further developed, the great cities of our empire became the centres of manufacture for the whole globe, and our ports and harbours the emporium of universal commerce; and in 1873 the sum reached 700,000,000, ten times the amount it was at the beginning of this century, when the trade was restricted by laws made for the imaginary purpose of its extension, but which really defeated their own object. This mighty commerce is in all its branches, one way or another, represented by commercial travellers, who form the very life-blood of all industry; for without their aid it would be useless to manufacture such vast quantities of merchandize; and without their talent for travelling, selling, bartering, and distribution, millions of pounds sterling would lie idle, and millions of our population would be compelled to remain worse than idle. They go north, east, west, and south—from England to Japan, from China to Peru, from London to Constantinople, from Manchester to Calcutta, and from Glasgow to St. Petersburg—to represent and promote the trade of England. They are to trade what the electric telegraph is to thought, what the veins and arteries are to the human body. They go forth as trusted

agents to deal sometimes with vast amounts, sometimes with troublesome accounts, to make known various new inventions, new fabrics, whatever is produced as an article of commerce : these things must by them be heralded to all parts of the civilized and uncivilized corners of the earth."

The merchant princes at home who have sent these travellers to our colonies are men, usually, of magnificent physique, having large round Cromwellian heads with massive square foreheads, keen perceptions, and active brain power, for the most part Yorkshire and Lancashire born. They are men who work hard and think harder than any other class of Englishmen. Simple in their habits, and many of them unpretentious, homely, and even rough, uncouth, and illiterate, but made of such sterling material that it goes far to condone for an ungainly exterior. I am now speaking of the grandfathers and fathers of many of our rich merchants who are now M.P.'s, basking in a sunshine of wealth and magnificence made by their forefathers. Query?—whether if this wealth had depended upon many of the *present* merchant princes themselves it would have been forthcoming ; for it is a well-known fact that few men inherit the ability of their parents. It has been said that it takes three generations to make a clever man, a genius ; but that you can make a fool any day of the week. One can hardly understand why an ignorant aristocrat should look down upon an intelligent business man as being several grades lower in

the social scale ; but it is much more difficult to see the reason why a merchant prince who has not himself made a penny of his money, should look down with scorn on the pit from which he has been digged and the rock from which he was hewn. Yet this, however inconceivable, is a deplorable fact. Mr. Gladstone remarked at Liverpool as long ago as 1872 : “ I know not why commerce should not have its old families, rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation. It has been so in other countries ; I trust it will be so in this country. I think it is a subject of sorrow and almost of scandal when those families who have either acquired or recovered station and wealth through commerce turn their backs upon it, and seem ashamed of it.” But this will continue to be the case so long as Mr. Gladstone and other prime ministers offer bribes in the shape of knighthoods, baronetcies, and peerages, for political electioneering and not for statesmanlike qualities. For many of the manufactured knights make only bastard aristocrats. If we must have a House of Lords, if we must have an aristocracy, let us have the right colour ; let it be of the purest blue blood. I know that it is computed that it costs £30,000,000 per annum. What of that ? Some Americans would give £40,000,000 a year for such an aristocracy. But after all, the true aristocracy is that of the intellect. Commercial or otherwise, it is brain power, a living, working, directing force, that evolves order out of chaos, health from disease,

beauty from deformity, and commerce out of barbarism. While commercial men have nothing but contempt for those who disdain commerce, they do not consider it any compliment to their fraternity that the Duke of Argyll's son should be in the tea trade, though they admire the courage that dares to run amuck against the class idiocy which maintains such silly objections.

Those who recognize cause and effect must see that it is the business faculty that is the motive power which stimulates and develops human progress. It is this power, as I have already said, which urged our forefathers to leave our shores and go to all parts of the world trading with, civilizing, and clothing the inhabitants of every clime ; and that the accumulation of wealth in business, as *The Daily News* says, "neither dulls nor entirely absorbs the intelligence nor relaxes public spirit, is shown by the intimate connection of manufacturing and commercial firms with recent political history, and the immense sums spent on the institutions of the great towns of the North and Midlands. Mr. Gladstone, as every Englishman knows, is the son of a Liverpool merchant, while Mr. Bright lives close to his mill on the fringe of the moor at Rochdale. Mr. Forster is a prominent member of the firm whose enterprise has brought wealth into the retired region of Upper Wharfedale ; Sir Charles Dilke is the grandson of the founder and is actually owner of *The Athenaeum* ; Mr. Chamberlain has only within a few years retired from the manufacture of wood-

screws, as they are called, in order to devote himself to political life ; Mr. Mundella manufactures hosiery ; Lord Dudley is a coal merchant and iron manufacturer, and is one of a long list of Peers who, like Lord Londonderry, ‘run’ their own collieries, or let them to great consumers like those of Jarrow and Middlesbrough. Lord Ardilaun is a brewer, like Mr. Stansfeld and Mr. Bass ; Lord Wimborne is an ironmaster ; Lord Jersey is a banker, like Sir John Lubbock, the Barings, Glynns, and Rothschilds ; and the well-known names of Mappin, Colman, Palmer, Fairbairn, Feilden, Henry Holden, Hope, Jardine, Leatham, and others too numerous to mention, testify to the close alliance between trade and the public life of England.”

The human animal is born naked now, whatever our pre-Adamite originators were. He is therefore compelled to clothe himself, and can in consequence fit himself to inhabit any and every clime. The English have not only clothed themselves, but a great part of the uncivilized world ; and I am of opinion that, if necessary, they could quickly produce machinery that would supply every man, woman, and child with clothing the wide world over, and our merchants and colonial travellers would, if they were well paid, take a pleasure in distributing it.

Addison remarks : “There are not more useful members in a commonwealth than merchants. They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good offices, distribute the gifts of nature, and find work for the

poor. . . . Trade, without enlarging the British territories has given us a kind of an additional empire; made our landed estates infinitely more valuable, and added an accession of other estates as valuable as the lands themselves." Emerson says: "I find the Englishman to be him of all men who stands firmest in his shoes. They have in themselves what they value in their horses—mettle and bottom. On the day of my arrival in England, a gentleman, in describing the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, happened to say, 'Lord Clarendon has pluck like a cock, and will fight till he dies;' and the one thing the English value is pluck. The cabmen have it, the merchants have it, the bishops have it. . . . The Englishman speaks with all his body. His elocution is stomachic, as the American's is labial. The Englishman is very petulant and precise about his accommodation at inns and on the roads; a quibble about his toast and his chop and every species of convenience, loud and pungent in his expression of impatience at any neglect, in his manner, in his respiration, and the inarticulate noise he makes in clearing the throat—all is significant of burly strength. He has stamina; he can take the initiative in emergencies.

"'O'er bog or steep, through straight, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet, pursues his way,
And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps or flies' (*Milton*)."

This our colonial traveller has done, and will do again, with the pluck and endurance for which our changeable climate has educated and fitted him, and the

talent and tact for business and change which he has for centuries inherited. A great deal has been said in respect to our being descended from the lost tribes of Israel. Our desire for commerce and for "inheriting the land" (other people's) evidently points to a sympathy with that race.

Talent and tact, I have said, are the essentials; and I can imagine that the traveller who leaves our shores for the Continent, our colonies, or the other various countries of the world, would require these two essentials to successful business in no ordinary degree. And I shall certainly call him the King of commercial ambassadors, for whatever ability our home travellers require for the successful conduct of their work, the colonial travellers require the same kind of talent intensified—endurance, courage, judgment, knowledge of mankind, physical prowess, tact, and general ability, and all of a higher order. For the colonial traveller has to strap his cash around his body and carry a brace of pistols in his belt. He has to travel hundreds of miles through forest and swamp, with no one but his faithful steed and dog as companions. He is subject to storms which we only read about, and to dangers of tropical heats and arctic cold which we can only imagine. He travels literally with his life in his hands, often outside the limits of civilization, seeing more wild beasts than men, and hearing more roars and growls than human voices. He above all requires the tact that has the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the

keen scent and the lively touch ; a tact that shall be “the interpreter of all riddles, the surmounter of all difficulties, the remover of all obstacles.”

Tact and talent are often confounded as one and the same principle, but they are totally different, tact being as superior to talent as the sunlight is to a rushlight. Scargill says, “Tact is useful in all places and at all times. It is useful in solitude, for it shows a man his way into the world ; it is useful in society, for it shows a man his way through the world. Talent is power, tact is skill ; talent is weight, tact is momentum ; talent knows what to do, tact knows how to do it ; talent makes a man respectable, tact makes him respected ; talent is wealth, tact is ready money ; for all the practical purposes of life, tact carries against talent ten to one. Talent may obtain a living, tact will make one. Talent gets a good name, tact a great one. Talent convinces, tact converts ; talent is fit for employment, but tact is fitted for it. It has a knack of slipping into place with a sweet silence and glibness of movement as a billiard-ball insinuates itself into the pocket. It can be at all points of the compass, while talent is ponderously and learnedly shifting a single point. Talent brings to market that which wants ; tact produces that which is wished for. Talent toils for a posterity which will never repay it ; tact throws away no pains, but catches the passion of the passing hour. Talent builds for eternity ; tact on a short lease and gets good interest. Tact is useful, portable, applicable, always alive,

always alert, always marketable ; it is the talent of talents, the availability of resources, the applicability of power, the eye of discrimination, the right hand of intellect." It is this tact that the English colonial traveller pre-eminently possesses ; and for him it speaks all languages, is a key to all hearts, the "open sesame" to all doors, the philosopher's stone, the ready pen of a ready writer that can always find blank cheques and can fill in the amount to its own liking. Without this tact no traveller can be successful either abroad or at home. To be with or without this lodestone is to be with or without the all in all.

The annexed particulars are copied from our own valuable little paper "On the Road," ably edited by Mr. John Wells Thatcher ; and they will assist the reader in forming an opinion of the travellers' institutions in our colonies, and will be of great service as an introduction to our fraternity beyond the seas ; who, I can assert from experience, will treat any brother commercial with the utmost heartiness and respect, if he only carries with him his proper credentials.

COLONIAL COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

"The Rules of the Commercial Travellers' Association of Victoria, Australia, the object of which is 'For necessitous members, their wives, and for scholarships for their children.' The association was established in 1881.

Last year the members numbered ninety-eight; this year's report shows an addition of thirty-three new members.

"In connection with the association a club has been started, and the committee hope 'that before long they will have such a building in the city of Melbourne as will not only be an ornament to the city, but also an immense benefit to all those connected with it.'

"It seems that our brethren over the water have started a 'Relief-day Collection,' on the lines which are so advantageously pursued by the associations in 'the mother country.'

"The association further states in its report that 'It is a matter of regret that some few travellers—from the fact that they are not likely to want pecuniary aid from the society's fund—still stand aloof, instead of in a general way giving their support and co-operation to a class to which they belong.' We have heard the same statement made much nearer home. We would add, in conclusion, that the offices of the association are 12, Elisabeth Street, Melbourne."

THE AMERICAN AND CANADIAN COMMERCIAL AGENT,
OR "*DRUMMER.*"

While travelling in the United States in May and June, 1882, I found not a few of the very best and smartest commercial travellers were those recently imported from England. From their report, and from what I have read in their own organs—which speak of

there being over 100,000 "drummers" in the United States—I infer that, notwithstanding the many advantages a new country has to offer to men of health and enterprise, they are not commensurate with the superior privileges that one can command in an older and more civilized community. And I am therefore still of opinion that the chances of success to all honest men with tact, talent, and character, are quite equal here in our own tight little island to those of any part of the globe ; and that there has been no time in our commercial history when men of talent, commercial experience, and industrious habits were so much in demand, and therefore able to command a corresponding position and remuneration at home as well as abroad. If any one imagines that competition is less keen, work less arduous, railway travelling less fatiguing, legislation less harassing—a few weeks, even, in America or the colonies will quickly undeceive him. For instance, the State of Florida has on her statute-books the following law relative to commercial travellers :—

"Section 5—Chapter 3413.—Any commercial agent, usually known as a 'drummer,' who shall fail to exhibit his license, as such, to a collector of revenue, or his deputy, before soliciting any orders or doing any business whatever, as a drummer or commercial agent, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall be fined not less than fifty nor more than one hundred dollars, or punished by imprisonment in the county gaol not exceeding two months."

The following particulars are from an American traveller in a letter to myself, in which he says : "As you have some knowledge of this country, I will sketch my route from New York to Cleveland, Columbus, St. Louis, 1068 miles from New York ; then Chicago, Milwaukee, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, New York. Each journey covers about four thousand miles ; it takes forty-two to fifty days, at a cost of about eleven dollars, or £2 4s., per day. Some houses allow their travellers twelve dollars a day. Of the time mentioned, I spend about a fortnight in Chicago ; but the life is a dreary one. I spend most of my evening in reading, writing, and straightening my stock, which is large, weighing six to seven cwt."

For the use of any of my readers who may be thinking of a Canadian journey, the undermentioned Commercial Travellers' Associations will be found of service : The Commercial Travellers' Association of Canada, James Sargent, Secretary, Toronto, Province of Ontario ; The Dominion Commercial Travellers' Association, R. C. Simpson, Secretary and Treasurer, 38, St. Joseph Street, Montreal, Province of Quebec, P. O. Box 534 ; The Western Ontario Commercial Travellers' Association, J. Atkinson, Secretary, London, Province of Ontario ; The Maritime Commercial Travellers' Association, Halifax, N.S., Jas. Fraser, Secretary, P.O. Box 1.

Young countries, like young men, go ahead of their ancestors. This is notable in their railway ticket arrange-

ments, as the annexed extract plainly shows. But it is much easier to do it in America and our colonies, as they have not so many interests to consult. Yet I am hopeful that our new association, the United Kingdom Commercial Travellers' Alliance, will educate the railway companies to see their own interest in this matter. *The Commercial Traveller* of Toronto says:—

“The thousand-mile ticket which came into popular use on the American railroads some years ago, and latterly on our own roads in Canada, was a great boon to the constant traveller. The frequent trouble of booking at the different road stations was in a great degree lessened, and the railway companies' agents were less crowded at their different wickets. There was, however, possible ground for suspicion that these tickets were just a little subject to a trifle of crooked business on the part of the users desirous of gaining a few dollars by actions of meanness and collusion, and, for a time, the system was discontinued; it has again, however, been revived and improved upon, and now we have, or they in the United States have, what is known as the ‘Highbee ticket;’ it is good for five thousand miles over different lines of railroad, and a traveller may go from any point to any point in a certain territory on this ticket. This ticket has its coupons over different roads, which coupons are cancelled and reported to the companies' offices as they become dead. It is claimed that the ‘Highbee ticket’ will be productive of an increased passenger

business over the railroads, as they dispose of five times as much travel on every ticket sold. Mr. F. D. Highbee, an experienced railroad man of Chicago, is the originator, and the *Cincinnati Drummer* asks ‘that its claims be examined and given a fair discussion.’”

The following graphic description of roughing it as a commercial traveller in Australia from H. J. W., which appeared in “On the Road,” cannot fail to be of interest to all “Ambassadors of Commerce,” and I heartily thank H. J. W. for so valuable a contribution to our literature. For no amount of theorizing or hearsay is equal to practical knowledge. He commences thus:—

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLING IN AUSTRALIA.

Some few years back, my health not being good, I concluded to take a trip to the Australian colonies. I therefore took passage in a large steamer to Melbourne, and, after a very fair voyage, reached the town in forty-five days. When I arrived at Melbourne, I at once went to William’s Hotel, near the Custom House, and I must say that it was a most comfortable hotel for a stranger arriving in a strange country.

I found Melbourne far from suiting my taste, although the city is a most splendid place. It is laid out in square blocks, with magnificent wide streets, but the style of the people and their way of doing business did not agree with mine. Every one that I met seemed to delight in what they termed “taking a rise out of me.”

Concluding from what I saw that it was not suited to my ideas of business, I determined to go on to Sydney. I took a house at Woolloomooloo, in the suburbs of Sydney, and in twenty-four hours I had the whole house completely furnished. Three days afterwards I was engaged as suburban traveller for a wine house ; so you see I lost no time in getting a berth, although in a business I knew nothing whatever about.

Many young men in going out there determine that the first thing to do is to see the country and enjoy themselves ; and then, when they find their funds getting low, they seek a berth.

I got on very well in my new line, and found no difficulty in making trade, as the people were a different class of persons to those in Melbourne ; in fact, their style of business is more after the style carried on in the "old country."

Not finding the W. & S. trade quite suitable to my ideas or tastes, I kept my eyes and ears open, and soon heard of a vacancy that was likely to occur in my particular business, and which I knew I should be more at home in. I applied for the vacancy, and had the pleasure of obtaining it. But this time it was not suburban travelling. I was required to take up a journey covering the principal parts of New South Wales, and at first I felt a wee bit timid about undertaking it in a country that was quite strange to me ; and besides, I knew that it would not be such smooth travelling as we have in our own

country. I had to get all my "traps" together, preparatory to starting the following week. The said traps consisted of a buggy, a light vehicle on four wheels, yet very strong to stand the heavy travelling of the interior. Instead of steel springs, the buggy had strong leather braces, because steel springs would fly to pieces at the first boulder of rock one would drive over. I also had three horses—one to use as saddle horse, or leader, when necessary; the remaining two were "polers." Also I had to provide myself with a complete set of tools for repairs; two heavy American axes, to cut a way through the bush when the road or track was blocked by a fallen tree; three large canvas water bottles, to carry stock of water; a light calico tent, mackintosh sheet and blanket; a "tin Billy can" to do cooking in, a few other utensils, a brace of revolvers and ammunition, and, last of all, a breechloading rifle. The latter I added myself, for the sake of sport, knowing I should get some fine shooting. I had a young man with me as groom, to attend to the horses, and to do all rough work, and to open my samples out when I arrived at any large town.

You may imagine my feelings when I had to see to all the above being got together. I felt almost inclined to back out of my engagement. But I thought others had been before me, and got on all right, and why should not I?

When all was ready I started off, and the first portion of my journey was by rail over the Blue Mountains to

Wallerwang, my buggy and horses and other traps going by same train. Upon reaching Wallerwang my journey might then be said to commence, as I then had to drive through the colony.

The first portion of the way was right enough, there being a very fair road, but the farther I advanced the rougher the country became, and the towns were situated wider apart. Of course, when a town could not be reached then we camped out, and our living was of the most primitive fashion. We had to pitch our tent, and prepare our own meals, which consisted mostly of corned beef, tea, and damper, the latter being flour kneaded into dough and made in a flat cake and baked in the ashes. I can say now that I never enjoyed any meals in my whole life better than those primitive meals on the grass. I oftentimes look back with longing to those days when I hear the waiters here droning through their usual cry, day after day, of "Chops—steaks—ham and eggs."

As regards the horses, we had to carry a supply of fodder for them, and when we pitched our nightly tent we had to hobble our steeds and give them a feed, and turn them loose in the bush. We never but once had any difficulty in catching them again in the morning, during the whole of my travels in Australia.

Travellers here at home talk of being hardworked, and that they have this, that, and the other to contend with ; but theirs is a king's life compared with what they would have to do if they travelled the colonies ; and I should

advise such to go out and try it, and they would be soon broken in. You would never hear them utter a complaint again. No home-stayer has any conception of the ups and downs of colonial travelling, and the way in which one has to rough it. One has mountains to ascend and descend, rivers to ford, and to dig one's way out of a bog occasionally, besides very often having to cut a road for one's self through the bush. The roads are really no roads at all, but simply a track through the immense forests, and oftentimes that is very indistinct ; if it were not for the "blaze marks" upon the trees one would not know whether he was on the track or not.

Again, when crossing the mountains you drive over boulders of rock with, frequently, two of the wheels grinding the air, and having your teeth nearly jolted out of your head. Then you go along the edge of some vast precipice, where one false step would send you hundreds of feet down on to the rocks beneath.

You will frequently get "bogged," especially after a rain ; and it *does* rain there—in solid sheets of water. The buggy and horses will sink two or three feet into the mire, and then you have the pleasure of getting into it yourself to dig away from the wheels and the feet of the horses. Twigs, boughs of trees, and young saplings, must be placed under the horses' feet and under the wheels, so as to enable them to obtain a footing and a purchase. I have been many times six or seven hours travelling through a mile of boggy country.

In fording rivers or creeks, where there are no bridges, or where they are washed away, and the water runs deep, you have then to procure a few good-sized trunks of trees, and lash them to the wheels and the body of the buggy ; then you swim your horses across, and afterwards make them pull your vehicle across the river.

At other times, especially in the summer months, one has to endure great suffering through the scarcity of water when travelling across the plains. At night-time the annoyance from mosquitoes and other insects is almost unbearable, except in the mountains, and there you have a little peace from the venomous little pests. During the daytime one is again tormented with other kinds of flies and insects, and it is necessary to wear a silken net round the face and head to protect yourself from the bites of these flies—oftentimes very serious, as a bite from one of them in the corner of the eye will close that optic for a week or ten days, besides which it does not add to one's beauty, as it gives you the appearance of having one, or a pair, of beautiful black eyes.

The hotel accommodation, in some parts of the colonies, is detestable, and you are served with bad food, bad drink, dirty beds, and little or no attendance ; but they do not forget to charge ! Therefore, upon the whole, camping out was in many cases far to be preferred. The climate is one of the finest under the sun, and travellers can sleep out in the open (providing they cover themselves up) during the whole year round, with-

out feeling any ill-effects. During the whole of my travels in the colonies, extending over five years, I never knew what it was to have a day's illness, and hardly such a thing as a headache, except on a very hot day.

The winter time there is not like ours, because you see little or no frost or snow, except on the mountains, whilst on the plains it is as warm as our days in this country are in June.

The business people are, in most cases, very glad to see you, more especially those far into the interior, and your orders are, generally speaking, something worth booking.

The transit of goods from the capital takes up a deal of time, and in many cases it is three or four months before a customer obtains his goods. The carrying is done in the interior by large heavy waggons drawn by from eight to twelve horses, or by bullocks yoked together in teams of from twelve to twenty.

Of course, it is a frequent occurrence to break the pole of your buggy ; and if it is not possible to splice it, or lash it together, you have to manufacture a new one yourself. You cut down a likely sapling, and shape it off with the axes ; plane it off smooth, and fit on the pole irons ; and lo, presto ! you have another pole, almost as good as could be turned out by a practical man. Sometimes one has a tyre come off the wheels, and it is really the most awkward job one can have to do to put it on again.

As I said before, I took a young fellow with me as

groom, to do most of the rough work ; but I found I had to do much of it myself, otherwise we should never have made any headway on our journey.

It is now nearly ten years since I went out, and things have changed a little ; more railways have been opened up, and the population has increased nearly double. Wages are not so good, and provisions and all necessaries are very much higher in price. Competition is keener in almost every business ; but notwithstanding this, if a young man has all the necessary requirements and, above all, plenty of confidence in himself that he can conquer all difficulties, then I advise that one to go, and he will no doubt be successful as a traveller in Australia.

I have found all the foregoing confirmed by conversation with old colonial travellers who are now rich men, and with whom I come in daily business contact. And in addition, I am informed that the original storekeepers were men who knew absolutely nothing of the articles they were vending ; many of them being retired military officers, doctors, mechanics, navvies, &c. I have been told of the case of a traveller who was met, and who, not having any money about him, was stripped of his entire clothing ; of a well-known colonial traveller who lost himself for five days through getting off the track. A practical joke has been told me by another old colonial. One day at the Castlemaine Hotel, there being no business to be done, and it being known that a commercial traveller was at a certain place some sixty miles away,

eleven travellers agreed to wire the said lonely traveller to come on ; for he (the one who was deputed to wire) was alone, and there was plenty of business about. The lonely one came, and was met, to his astonishment, by the eleven, who had the laugh ; but, being decent fellows, they stood him a good supper to soothe matters a bit. However, the solitary commercial saw every customer, and told them how he had been sold. They sympathized with him, and gave him the very orders which some of the conspirators would have obtained.

The annexed hints to the gushing, inexperienced, obtrusive commercial is from the pen of a well-known old colonial traveller, now a buyer for one of the largest export firms in the city. I hope that those for whom it was intended have profited by a sight of this placard hung up in the office of my friend. It reads as follows :—

READ THIS !

1. Gentlemen wearing kid gloves, and wishing to sell goods, should not knock, but open the office door, walk in, and sit down.
2. Take a seat as near as possible to the desk. This will enable you to overlook all our memos and correspondence.
3. Should any goods of the same kind as you are showing be lying on the counters, take them up, examine them, ask the prices, and from whom we bought them.



4. Open out all your samples and goods, cover our counters, expatiate on their superior value, but on no account mention the price. This always saves time and keeps other gentlemen from coming in.

5. If we say we are not buying the class of goods you are showing, take no notice of this, as we are only lunatics, and it passes the time to make these remarks.

6. In our busiest season, if you have nothing to show, call regularly every morning and ask after our health. We are here for the sole purpose of answering questions of this kind.

7. Should it be raining, put your wet umbrella on the counter, the moisture from it will give all *our* silks, ribbons, &c., a nice shaded effect, and spoil those of your competitors.

8. If we open our office door to say we do not want to see you, ask us to spare just half-a-second and keep us in the passage talking about your grandmother for twenty minutes. All this facilitates our business and soothes the tempers of the other gentlemen waiting.

9. Should you meet us in the street, take our arms and ask us to step into a doorway to inspect your samples, as these offices are only to look at, and not for the purpose of buying goods.

10. In going out, pull the door to as violently as possible. The noise made thereby helps to collect our thoughts.

TYPES OF SUCCESSFUL TRAVELLERS.

“ ’Tis not in mortals to command success.
We’ll do more, Sempronius : we’ll deserve it.”
ADDISON.



CHAPTER XIII.

Types of Successful Travellers.

“NOTHING succeeds like success” is one of the most popular of proverbs; and, like most adages, it has its converse, which we may render, “Nothing fails like failure.” In other words, there is undoubtedly a law which governs failure and success in life, as absolute, if we did but know it, as gravitation or the fact that two and two make four. This adds to him that already hath, and takes from the man who fails to properly use even that which he possesses.

Success is simply the following up of our first accomplished task. The successful man is always moving, growing, rising, developing from the lower to the higher, the first success being the means of securing another and yet another triumph. To be successful one must never be absolutely satisfied. A young traveller, who

having succeeded in getting his feet firmly planted on the central rung of the commercial ladder, once asked his firm for a very large advance of salary. "Why," said his employer, "it is only twelve months since we gave you a handsome increase." "Quite true," replied the young man; "I think I'm worth to you what I am asking." "Do you, indeed?" was the employer's response. He further remarked, "I tell you honestly what I think; that is, that some men are never satisfied, and that you are one of that number." "True," said the traveller, "and I never intend to be. You will, sir, pardon me for saying that if you had been satisfied with the £30 per annum you originally received, you would not now have been receiving your £2000 a year as partner in this concern." The employer was so struck with the reply that he gave him all he asked, and in ten years from that day the same young man was as good as a partner himself in the same business. No sooner had he gained one success than he was dissatisfied with standing still, and he then set his face straight forward to the next goal. There seems to me to be imprinted on all nature the admonition, Move on! You have an appointed work; do it with all your might, and reward is certain. Neglect it at your peril, and punishment is equally sure. The thunder and the electric flash proclaim movement, the purification of the atmosphere, and a healthier and sweeter life for the earthly inhabitants. The magnificent roar of the tide as it rolls towards the

shore speaks of a constant, steady, and unerring determination not to stand still. Even the globe itself is unable to retain its equilibrium except by continuously revolving on its axis for the benefit of its myriad forms and varieties of life.

“ Beneath this starry arch
Nought resteth or is still,
But all things hold their march
As if by one great will.
Moves one, moves all :
Hark to the footfall !
On, on, for ever ! ”

This I consider to be the logical inference, and there is no real success to be obtained if there be no dissatisfaction with things as they are, and if there be no reaching forward, no striving towards things as they should be.

Ruskin has said in his paper on “ Pre-Raphaelitism : ” “ It is written, ‘ In the sweat of thy brow,’ but it was never written ‘ in the breaking of thy heart,’ shalt thou eat bread. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed. They must be fit for it, they must not do too much of it, and they must have a sense of success in it. The first thing a man has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be very safely guided by his *likings*, if he be *not* also guided by his *pride*. People usually reason in some like fashion as this: I don’t seem quite fit for head manager in the firm of A. B. & Co., therefore I

am in all probability fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Whereas they ought rather to reason thus : I don't seem quite fit to be head manager in the firm of A. B. & Co. I might do something in a small greengrocery business ; I used to be a good judge of peas. That is to say, always trying lower instead of higher *until they find bottom*. Once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees *safely* ; instead of disturbing every one in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes. There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, the moral good ; only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the mole-hill of the world, to be averted at any cost whatever of struggle, anxiety, and even of the shortening of life itself. Instead of all this a man should be a good judge of his own work, and have the just encouragement of the sense of progress in it, and an honest consciousness of victory."

Here we see, I venture to assert, a strong corroboration of what I have already advanced ; for although Ruskin teaches his pupils not to care for what the world or society says or thinks about them, yet he insists upon the necessity of the sense of progress, the sense of success, just encouragement, and consciousness of victory in all that we do. The only natural and true victory is to act "that each to-morrow find us farther than to-day." Making Perseverance our bosom friend, Experience our wise counsellor, Caution our elder brother, and Hope our

guardian genius—thus we make genuine progress, and thus only. To quote the words of our Poet-Peer—

“ I hold it truth with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.”

“ Coming, seeing, and conquering,” is very pretty as a trinitarian poetic expression ; but real conquering means a vast deal more than mere coming and seeing. David the stripling was taunted by his elder brother as being vain, and as leaving the few sheep in the wilderness simply that he might come and see the battle. But David had a deeper sense of the necessity of the time ; that sense which suggested the brave words, “What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel ? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the hosts of the living God ?” and his bold and daring reply to the king : “Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, likewise a bear, and took a sheep out of the flock ; and I went out after him and smote him, and took it out of his mouth : and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard and smote him and siew him. So thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and therefore this Philistine shall be as one of them.” I know of no story so fraught with the true ring of a noble and brave spirit. David had learned by much experience and, I doubt not, by many a failure, how to use with deadly precision

(as events proved) the sling and the stone. He came, he saw, he conquered ; not by the accident of birth, not by having greatness thrust upon him, but by an act of power and skill acquired by years of practical experience. By a certain and therefore scientific aim did he conquer and gain a victory which made the shepherd-boy a king.

Here we have one of the greatest examples of success depending on fitness for the work and "a sense of success in it." It seems absolutely necessary for all great men to have been, like David, for many years in the wilderness with a few poor sheep, there to gain experience, to become educated and fitted for the position which will one day offer itself. We have a long time often to wait for flood tide before we can lead on to fortune, yet everything comes to him, it has been said, who can work and wait. Emerson, in his "English Traits," says that "the success of the English race is not sudden or fortunate, but they have maintained constancy and self-equality for many ages." I think it is the power of endurance with a constant supply of hope that gives us our pre-eminence. We are not satisfied to wait until trade comes to us, but we go out to all corners of the civilized and uncivilized world and force ourselves and our commodities on all peoples, thus becoming in more than an individual sense ambassadors of commerce. But it is of the units I wish to speak first—of the steady, plodding, industrious,

AVERAGE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER,

who represents this real and every-day success ; a success that gives him happiness in his work and his employers satisfaction.

Travellers who are regular in their habits, trustworthy men, whose motto is "Give me neither poverty nor riches," men who never get over-excited about business, who have no idea of "setting the Thames on fire" (and who do not see the sense of it if they could), prosecute their labours in a quiet, unostentatious manner. The smarter and more active men like this kind of man, and call him a "decent fellow," because he is not too strong an opponent ; and the lazy and the indolent like him because he does not set them too high a standard of success. He is not less popular at home ; for whilst the "slow coach" is nearly always behind, and the "gassy" man risky and uncertain—doing a big thing one day and little or nothing probably for a week afterward—our sound medium man, who does a genuine average business, is after all the backbone of the house, and so of the greatest service. Why? Because he works on day after day in a steady, natural way, and is to be depended upon for a fair average trade. The value of this man is not represented by the actual orders he may send through the post, but by the worth to the firm of the ground he covers. Many a showy, dashing fellow will be able to show larger figures at the end of the year as the

result of his sheet orders, but he usually does it with fewer customers; and although well in with some, he makes himself so offensive to others, that the actual trade of the house over the whole ground is considerably less than when the more modest traveller covered it. The latter more truly represented the entire interest of the house, and encouraged his friends not only to give him orders, but to send them to the firm in the intervals of his journeys, and also to visit it when in the market. All this will be better understood if the term "ambassador" be remembered, for it is essential that a good traveller be a diplomatist.

THE ARTIFICIAL TRAVELLER.

This type represents a more pronounced success, a making haste to be rich at all costs, even at the risk of health and life itself. "Get money; get it honestly if thou canst, but get money." Get position, and ape men above you in the social scale. The M.P. argues, "If I can only attach my name to this Act of Parliament my present influence will be increased, I may get a seat in the ministry, and my name will be handed down to posterity; I therefore intend to strain every nerve, to play my cards right, to leave no stone unturned day or night, to accomplish my ends. It is most important that my first venture should be a success; for if I blunder in my first attempt my constituents will forsake me, the press will write me down, I may never again have the chance

of retrieving my shattered fortunes, and I may then consider my political career as practically closed."

The same argument applies with equal force to the military man, the attorney, the physician, the preacher, the traveller. To get a name nowadays seems to be the one thing worth striving for. Do some daring deed, win some popular case, cure some rich nobleman, preach a few sensational sermons, pander in some way to the popular craving for novelty, and you will get fame. Make one mistake at the outset, and you are a Lord Chelmsford disgraced. Only let fortune favour you at the beginning, and, like Sir Garnet Wolseley, you rapidly become Sir Garnet, General Sir Garnet, and ultimately Lord Wolseley. In the one instance you sink into insignificance, in the other you are petted, feasted, and worshipped as a fetich. Lose your case, and you are a professional bankrupt; win it, and you have more business than you can accept. Cure your royal patient, and you are certain of a baronetcy, and every sick rich noodle will have medical advice from no one else. Your patient dies, and you may consider yourself as professionally dead. "Nothing succeeds like success." And nothing fails like failure. Men will give an apple where there's an orchard; they will give five talents to the person who has five, and despise him who has but one.

"There's a success which colours all in life,
Makes fools admired and villains honest;
All the proud virtue of this vaunting world
Fawns on success and power howe'er acquired."

This success is what may be termed hothouse success, artificial in its character and unsatisfactory in its results ; a feverish anxiety and painful desire to be a mushroom born of the fog and mist, withering under the bright sun of reality and the purer air of genuine progress. Successful men of this type never ask themselves—

“Can gold calm passion or make reason thine ?
Can we dig peace or wisdom from the mine ?
Wisdom to gold prefer, for 'tis much less
To make our fortune than our happiness.
Nothing is meaner than a wretch of state,
The happy are the only truly great.”

A further and appropriate answer I find in the following words by Howe : “He only is rich who lives upon what he has, owes nothing, and is contented. For there is no determinate sum of money nor quantity of estate that can denote a man rich, since no man is truly rich that has not so much as perfectly satiates his desire of saving more, for the desire of more is want and poverty.” I remember, when at Manchester, being much struck with this motto on a statue : “My happiness consisted not in the abundance of my riches, but in the fewness of my wants.”

If the end of progress be, as Bentham and John Stuart Mill aver, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” and if true happiness is to have but few wants and to thoroughly enjoy what one has, then the artificially successful utterly fail ; for the constant craving for *more*,

more, is want and poverty. The pleasure of such men is only in the acquirement and possession, not in the true *use*, of wealth. The successful man of this type is worse off than the absolute miser. His extreme anxiety and rush for wealth and position give him no peace and no rest ; whereas the miser has a measure of successful happiness, being more content with what he actually has, and not so over-anxious about the future. And if happiness consists in the fewness of wants, the miser of all men should be the happiest ; and I am disposed to think that he is very far from being the most miserable of men. I never saw this more strikingly exemplified than in the case of "Father Gaspard" in "Les Cloches de Corneville," in which Shiel Barry so admirably portrayed the value to the miser of the glittering coin. He kisses it, hugs it, covers his head with it, worships it, and the very sound of it is music to him and makes his heart rejoice. He worshipped it not because he was able to say, "I am worth so many thousand pounds more than my neighbours," but because he could say, "So long as I have this glittering gold in my possession, I have the means, the wherewithal of obtaining anything I may require. There is not a wish, if I choose, that need remain ungratified. If I buy land, it may decrease in value. If I purchase houses, they will require repairs, and I may not get my rent, and so on. At the present moment I am happy in possession of a power which can produce this, that, and the other. But if I part with the cash I

lose the charm of life, and shall thus have no means of gratifying my wishes."

A miser was once heard to say that he would do anything to secure another thousand pounds. A wager was laid privately that he should be asked to allow himself to be killed for a thousand pounds. It was mentioned to him. He took twenty-four hours to consider; and the time having expired, the parties called on him again, when his answer was: "Well, I have considered your offer, and have come to the conclusion that your thousand pounds would not be of any service to me after my decease; but I tell you what I am prepared to do, I will consent to allow you to half kill me for five hundred pounds."

This idea of being worth such and such an amount of money, and of dying worth so many thousands, is a very common one. Like many other things after a certain time in a man's life, use or habit becomes a second nature; and what is to be commended in a man from twenty to forty years of age as being a necessary duty (with a family to provide for, to educate, and to give a fair start in life), may be fittingly condemned in one after that time of life, if, when no necessity remains, he goes on toiling and growling, speculating and worrying himself and making his entire household miserable. His success becomes unreal, artificial, a curse instead of a blessing. In place of being a man, he becomes a slave. His mind becomes warped and diseased. He once controlled a

business and made money ; his business is now master and controls him, and the profits he makes unman him and reduce him to a pauper at his own gate. No more striking instance can be given than that of the wealthy Morrison, who rose from being a weekly paid hand to be proprietor of millions, and who, after retiring from business with vast riches, was so lunatic that he was accustomed to go to the office regularly as of yore for his weekly wage. All this applies to the men of the road. I know of one notable instance of a very fine old gentleman, who has had for years more than enough to handsomely retire upon. A bachelor, I believe, and, so far as I know, without encumbrance. The firm he represents wished him to give up, or he did give up voluntarily ; but having no charm outside his business, having cultivated nothing but the hoarding of money, he was miserable, and begged to be allowed to travel again if only to keep his mind employed, and so be saved from dying of sheer *ennui*. The usual reply to all this is, "It's better to wear out than to rust out." True ; but if you wear out before your time it is bad policy ; and this will be the case most certainly if you fiddle too much on one string. Is it not better to attune all the faculties and get the harmony of concerted action, so that you neither wear out nor rust out before the threescore years and ten ?

Again, I have met men on the road, so excessively anxious to do business and to add to their income, that

they have scarcely been honest in their dealings. Certainly they were dishonest to themselves in taking insufficient time for necessary refreshment, or in going altogether without their midday meal. I repeat that this means dishonesty to one's self; and a few years of such playing fast and loose with one's physical frame finally causes a breakdown in health, and premature old age. This type of commercial traveller, too, is so fearfully excitable, and so unduly desirous of securing the lion's share of the trade, that he is not very particular as to the dodges he uses to best other men.

I have mentioned in the chapter on Commercial Etiquette, that when one gentleman is engaged with a customer it is usual for another not to interrupt or intrude his presence. But the type in question is not at all particular in this respect, and has to be on some occasions very plainly told that he is wanting in that gentlemanly courtesy due to a brother traveller, and if he repeats such conduct a more drastic remedy will be applied. I am happy to say that these cases are not numerous; but that they are not so is due to the stringent unwritten laws of the road which are rigidly enforced. "All is fair in love and war," and in commercial travelling too; and very smart things may be done in a straightforward, legitimate manner; but to exceed this—as I am fain to believe even so excellent a type of traveller as George Moore did—is distinctly reprehensible.

THE LA-DI-DA "COMMERCIAL."

Another type of traveller I may call the "La-di-da Commercial." This is the showy, dashing, fashionably dressed swell of the road. He is heavily diamonded, elaborately pinned, and gold chain weighted, and you must make way for him on all occasions. He is a loud talker and a big bragger, has a farm, and talks of his "tits," of his swans on his lake, and his groom. He hunts, receives and gives invitations to shoot over certain covers, drives his own "tit" to the station, and instructs the groom to meet the 4.30 train, as he has a few chums dining with him at six. He is a regular country "masher." He is well up in the Funds ; he made such an amount by Turks, and landed a big thing out of Grand Trunks ; he discounts Egyptian stock, and the imbecile Government with the G. O. M.—"a G. O. fool"—at its head. He can name the winner of the St. Leger, and give the right tip for the Derby, while he made a hatful of money at Ascot. He is always in good form, and never has any losses. *At least he does not speak of them.* He commences his day's business an hour or two later than most men, and "shunts it" two or three hours earlier. He has always done the biggest thing with the largest man : would not condescend to open his book for less than ten hogshead of claret at a price, or five pipes of port ; only calls on wholesale buyers, is pleased with the sobriquet "Champagne Charlie," or any other music-hall slang which he is in the habit of using. He is

always flushed with "the needful," and constantly boasts of his income and of not paying income-tax. He travels more for pleasure than business, and is more often seen with kid gloves, cigar, and walking-stick than with samples. The food is never good enough for his dainty stomach, and the wine is "rubbish." He monopolizes *The Times*, the easy-chair, the fireplace, and the entire services of the waiters, boots, and other servants. He expects the most polite attention from every one else, and is incapable of reciprocating it. He is badly bred, ill-behaved, and purse-proud, as most of these "La-didda" fellows are. He is perhaps a son of the "governor," or he has by accident, or by the will of his grandmother, come into possession of a few thousand pounds more than "these common travellers." He has neglected all that is beautiful and noble in his nature, and imagines that money makes the man as well as "the mare to go," and that this gives him a right to disdain others who are infinitely his superiors in every respect.

What is the end of all this spurious imitation of the real article, the true man? Walk into any commercial room of any hotel in the kingdom; go straight to the mantelpiece; take up half a dozen small printed cards; and amongst many of the most deserving cases of distress you will find one which will answer the above question. "Mr. So-and-so, who travelled twelve years for such and such a firm, died at the age of thirty-nine, leaving a widow and five children totally unprovided for."

RARE OR BRILLIANT SUCCESS.

“Such splendid purpose in his eyes.”

Tennyson.

The theory of the survival of the fittest, which was only a few years ago “pooh-poohed,” is now adopted by all the best minds of the world. Darwin the evolutionist, while alive, was one of the best-abused and most maligned men in Europe ; but dead, he is worshipped and called the “epoch-maker,” the genius of the nineteenth century. He unfolded to us the great Bible of Nature, carefully turning over its leaves one by one : first the mineral, then the vegetable ; then the creeping-feeling-plants, half vegetable half animal ; then the animal with a simple stomach, then a complete animal, then man. He taught us that a plant became the strongest and fittest to live, and was most successful in its growth, when as a seedling in the forest it received a little more sunshine, a little more air, than many of its neighbours ; that it shoots upward day by day in virtue of its absorbing more food from the moisture through its roots, week after week inhaling a greater vitality from the atmosphere ; until, by its constant successes, leaving many feet behind it the saplings that have had a less favourable chance of life and growth, it springs forth into beauty and perfection.

Our brilliant men who meet with such rare triumphs have had similar natural advantages. There being no royal road to success, it is only to be accounted for by the successful person being born with many talents and

using them well. These are in a minority. The great intellects of the world are mighty in power but few in number. We may go a step farther back, and remark that the giant oak towering in majesty over the average of its little puny brother and sister saplings, is great in virtue of circumstances occurring during its formation, long before it left its parent tree as an acorn, ere it dropped with hundreds of others into the earth. It is equally true with mankind. True greatness must have its foundation in its embryo state ere it can be "to the manner born" and survive as the fittest of forces in the world. A type of success born of greatness depends upon an extraordinary "fortuitous combination of atoms," too subtle to discuss here in the abstract; and I only mention the fact to show that all is the outcome of a beautiful, wise, and beneficent law, and that nothing comes by chance; that a Raphael or a Shakespeare, a Galileo or a Newton, is the outcome of special advantages, produced under more favourable influences at work both before and after birth. Individuals who have had mothers of rare power and grandparents of marvellous ability are likely to be themselves remarkable. This is so evident to the ordinary intelligence, that I need not quote instances. Such individuals are born of great circumstances to create greater results for themselves and humanity at large. They are epoch-makers whose creative brain Nature has shaped with her own hands in the great womb of time, and who create ideas that smaller minds in the following centuries

weave into mental garments with which still smaller souls are clothed:—men and women, with giant minds, great and successful almost in spite of themselves.

In applying these remarks to men with extraordinary business capacity, it is only a question of degree. The principle remains the same.

Not a few of the millionaires, statesmen, lord mayors, and provincial mayors, were originally Ambassadors of Commerce. Such men as Cobden, George Moore, &c., illustrate the stuff travellers are made of. The best among them are men of good parts, of large brains, intelligent, active, excellent tacticians, with strong physical organization, plenty of endurance or staying power; men who can work, eat, and sleep well; in fact, the very pick of the commercial world, the select few of a warehouse. When you have made your choice of the best of this class of material, you find men who can render all they put their hands to brilliant and successful.

It is very singular that Bradford should have the distinguished honour of having possessed a popular commercial traveller now widely known in another sphere. I speak of the joint author of the famous drama “*The Silver King*,” H. A. Jones; a man who has made his mark, and of whom we as travellers are all proud. It is not generally known that Cobden, the great Free Trade statesman, was originally a traveller. He was the son of a small Sussex farmer, who died while Richard was a boy. He was taken charge of by an uncle who had a whole-

sale warehouse in London, into which he was in due time introduced. He afterwards became a partner in a Manchester printed cotton factory, and "took the road" as a commercial traveller for the house. Of this period in his career, Mr. John Morley says in his Life of Cobden : "From the drudgery of the warehouse he was now advanced to the glories of the road. We may smile at the keen elation with which he looked to this preferment from the position of clerk to that of traveller ; but human dignities are only relative, and a rise in the hierarchy of trade is doubtless as good matter for exultation as a rise in hierarchies more elaborately robed. Cobden's new position was peculiarly suited to the turn of his character. Collecting accounts and soliciting orders for muslins and calicos gave room, in their humble sphere, for those high inborn qualities of energy and sociability which in later years produced the most active and the most persuasive of popular statesmen. But what made the life of a traveller so specially welcome to Cobden was the gratification that it offered to the master passion of his life—an insatiable desire to know the affairs of the world. Famous men, who became his friends in the years to come, agree in the admission that they have never known a man in whom this trait of a sound and rational desire to know and to learn was so strong and so inexhaustible." Cobden's subsequent history is too well known and appreciated to make it necessary for me to recapitulate it here. Suffice it to say that Sir Robert Peel, in a memor-

able speech on June 29, 1846, wherein he gave all the credit of the repeal of the Corn Laws to Mr. Cobden, spoke thus : "The name which ought to be, and which will be, associated with the success of these measures, is the name of a man who, acting, I believe, from pure and disinterested motives, has advocated their cause with untiring energy and by appeals to reason, enforced by an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned—the name which ought to be, and will be, associated with the success of these measures is Richard Cobden." The sum of £70,000 was collected by his grateful countrymen and presented to him. He was offered the presidency of the Board of Trade under Lord Palmerston, which he refused to accept. His chief reason was that he was a decided opponent of Palmerston's warlike foreign policy. Now what were the principal ingredients in Cobden's character? In what consisted his true manhood? In the first place, being the son of a farmer, he had a well-knit, healthy body and a strong physical frame. His motives were disinterested. He advocated his cause, knowing and feeling it to be a *right one*, with untiring energy ; and, being a clear thinker, by appeals to reason and common sense ; and, being an orator, by an eloquence to be admired because it was simple and unaffected. Reverting to these facts, we see the weft and the woof which made him a truly great man. He had all the elements and forces, all the raw material properly combined, which produced one of nature's kings.

I think we may fairly claim Cobden as a product of "the road;" for it is only reasonable to conclude that if he had not first travelled for the calico-printing firm, he would not have had the taste and desire which afterwards inspired him to visit Egypt, Greece, Turkey, and America. He would not have written his famous pamphlet on "England, Ireland, and America," and his other on "Russia." He would not have been the man who to this day is respected, and for generations to come will be honoured as one who has blessed humanity by being the statesman and leader of the Free Trade movement.

I have already spoken of George Moore as the Cumberland lad, who, as a rough, uncouth country youth, came to London, and was at the beginning of his career the stupidest of all the Cumberland boys his employer ever had. He "felt out blind at first," but no sooner did he find congenial work on the road as a commercial traveller, than the stored-up energy and natural talent which had been pent up and unseen for want of scope to develop, began to be manifest. No sooner had "George" the opportunity to use his reserve power than he quickly went to the front, and held his own afterward, becoming one of the richest merchants and partner in one of the largest and most money-making concerns in the metropolis. George Moore, again, had similar genuine traits of character to those of Cobden. Simplicity, directness, vigour and determination, punctuality, promptness in emergency, benevolence, sympathy, honesty, and withal

an iron frame—these were the attributes of George Moore. I doubt not, if he had not shrunk from municipal and parliamentary honours, he might have become as great as Cobden himself, for he was made of the stuff and guided by the principles which would ultimately have placed him in the same rank. He was called the “Napoleon of the Road,” and as a graceful appendix to this chapter two brief personal histories are here set down. The first is a memoir of

GEORGE MOORE, ESQ., THE NAPOLEON OF THE ROAD.

No commercial traveller has had a greater claim to this title than the late George Moore, of the firm of Copestake, Moore, Crampton, and Co. (now Copestake, Hughes, Crampton, and Co.) No obstacle ever appeared too great for him to overcome, no opponent too formidable to vanquish, and no hill of difficulty too high for him to surmount. In fact, the more stubborn the obstruction, the more intense became the pleasure to him to annihilate it. He had in his mental, moral, and physical composition the raw material of greatness, and the judgment when very young to weave a strong double warp and weft of character which enabled him to withstand the many baneful temptations and allurements of the road which weaker men too often fall a prey to. Like all successful men, he had an intense faith in work ! work ! work ! He also represented his great prototype in appearing despotic. The first time that I met George

Moore was at the London Tavern during our school election. I was then a young traveller, and received a most unfavourable impression of him. His manner seemed to me to be most overbearing and dogmatic, too much of the *ego*, and too little respect for either the opinions or feelings of others. But when I knew more of him from those who were his intimate acquaintances, my views were at once modified, and ever since I have been more than satisfied that George Moore laboured with a genuine motive and pure spirit for the benefit of humanity in general, and his own fraternity (the commercial travellers) in particular. George Moore did nothing by halves. He was a man with intense convictions and burning desires, with large powers of organization and a strong will to direct ; in short, he was a born leader of men. Men of this stamp usually appear to weaker souls despotic, because they cannot afford to put the hands of their timepieces back to suit the time of the sluggard, or wait to argue each petty detail with the drones.

Hero-worship will continue as long as there are real heroes forthcoming, and George Moore is still a real one to all commercial men, especially to the travellers. The majority of men are more influenced by the personality and example of another man than by any amount of theorizing or preaching. I have therefore determined to give every one of my readers the advantage of gazing upon a very striking portrait of our hero, and getting



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from the look an inspiration that may enable them to go and in some measure do likewise. For what was actual in George Moore, is possible in a very large degree to many other men. I also reprint a short memoir from an unbiassed source. It appeared in *The Carlisle Journal*, November 24, 1876, four days after the fatal accident.

"In 1825, at the age of eighteen, George Moore made his first appearance in London, a smart, active young fellow, with perhaps a little more than the traditional half-crown in his pocket, but nevertheless with a purse that was, if anything, rather lighter than his heart. The shop in which he was placed had a high reputation, but the year was marked by a financial panic that necessarily had its effect upon all kinds of trade, and he had not been long behind a London counter before his ambition began to yearn for a still wider sphere of activity. The retail trade was too slow for him; his dreams had been of great enterprise and large dealings, and he felt that if he was to get on in the world he must acquire a footing in some wholesale house; and accordingly he once more made up his mind to seek another change. In this resolution he was strengthened by a romantic incident which has frequently been mentioned in public, and which we need not therefore hesitate to repeat here. One day, soon after he had entered upon his duties in Grafton House, Mrs. Ray, the wife of one of the principals, entered the shop, accompanied by her daughter, and the appearance of the young lady at once made a

strong impression upon the susceptible heart of the country lad. It was a case of love at first sight on his part—of such love as one seldom hears of except in the pages of fiction—a love that was ‘an Adam at its birth,’ that carried with it a consciousness of its own power and a determination to conquer what to many might under the circumstances have seemed to be insuperable obstacles. ‘If ever I marry,’ said the young shopman to one of his fellows when the lady had departed, ‘that girl shall be my wife,’ and it is a remarkable fact that for many years that vow remained registered in his heart as the expression of a fixed purpose, that it proved his chief incentive to exertion, and that in the end, as will be seen, it was auspiciously fulfilled by the prosperous city merchant being united in marriage to the daughter of his first London employer! Young Moore’s desire for employment in a wholesale establishment was generously encouraged by Mr. Ray, who kindly used his influence, and ultimately succeeded in obtaining him a situation with Messrs. Fisher, of Watling Street, then regarded as the first house of the kind in the world; and with that firm he began his career in the wholesale department of trade, as a warehouseman with a salary of £40 a year.

“The year 1825, as we have said, was a somewhat disastrous one for the trader; but it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and these mercantile embarrassments proved a lucky wind for George Moore. Several hands had either left their employment or had been transferred

across the Atlantic to a branch which Messrs. Fisher had recently opened in the United States, and readier opportunities were thus presented for advancement in the London house. To be transferred from the post of warehouseman to that of town traveller was only a natural gradation for any man of intelligence, energy, and industry; but in this case promotion was perhaps more rapid than it usually is in the ordinary course of events, so that at twenty-one George Moore found himself occupying a position that is often the goal for the ambition of men of much more mature years. Though young, however, he was more than a match for older and more experienced hands. Fresh from the country, his mind had been powerfully impressed by the contrast between the petty dealings in a Wigton shop and the great operations of a London warehouse; and being naturally of an inquisitive disposition, he never rested until he fully understood everything he saw. His whole interest was concentrated upon the work going on around him; he was not fully satisfied until he had mastered the details not of his own department only, but of every other that he had a chance of obtaining information about, for he still kept before him his favourite motto, ‘Aim high,’ and he was convinced that his only hope of success lay in knowing as much about his business as anybody else. ‘They shall not crush me; I *will* be great,’ wrote Charles Kean to a friend when envious London critics disparaged his first representation of ‘Hamlet;’

and he kept his word. ‘I *will* rise’ was the reflection always uppermost in the mind of the tyro London traveller, with his humble salary, and he too succeeded in accomplishing his purpose. George Moore entered upon his new duties with great alacrity. He brought to bear upon them an ample knowledge of his business, but in addition to that he possessed a quick intelligence, a manner that was prepossessing by reason of its honest bluntness and native candour, and, above all, he was endowed with a strong and vigorous constitution, and manifested a restless energy that was ever seeking full and fresh employment. Such qualities were not long in making their mark. His employers found that Moore’s orders exceeded in number and amount those of any of their other travellers, and they were not slow in recognizing his services and turning them to better account. In the course of a year or two the best ‘country ground’ visited by the firm became vacant, and the successful young town traveller was sent out to occupy it. In his new sphere he proved himself more than equal to his work. His predecessor, it seems, trusting to the acknowledged reputation of the firm he represented, had taken things rather easily, and, acting upon the belief that people could not get on without Fisher’s goods, had not done much to develop the trade. The new traveller, seeing a good opportunity of distinguishing himself, at once resolved to try how much he could increase his receipts. He called upon every shopkeeper of good

credit in the towns that he visited, and made a point of calling again and again until he got an order, for he was sure that where he once succeeded in gaining a footing he could not be dislodged ; and he never lost a moment of time in lingering in a town after he had done his work. His reputation as a pushing salesman at once spread. He was talked about in all the commercial rooms, he was complimented at the travellers' ordinary, and among the tradesmen of Manchester and Liverpool and the large towns of the north he was always welcomed as one to whom orders could be entrusted with the certainty of being executed with the greatest possible dispatch. But withal he bore his honours very modestly, and was not carried off his feet by the puff of praise. ‘It is the lace, not the seller of it, that does the work,’ he was wont to say ; ‘people can’t do without Fisher’s goods, and I only supply their wants.’ Yet he always took care to be on the spot when goods were wanted. In those days it must be remembered there were no railways. The coach was the only public conveyance, and between many places coaches ran only once a day, and in some instances less frequently. Nowadays if a traveller does not finish up his work at night, he can still put in an hour or two in the morning, and reach his next station by the middle of the day ; but such a delay forty or fifty years ago meant the loss of a day, and perhaps more. In after years Mr. Moore used often to relate how, after a hard day’s work in taking orders, he had sat up all

night packing his goods, and then rushed off by the early coach next morning rather than lose a moment of time unnecessarily ; and fortunately for him the ‘flesh’ in his case proved as strong as the ‘spirit,’ and his physique was able to bear the strain. It may perhaps be asked, Why all this haste ? A man cannot do more than his day’s work, and he will get his orders from his customers whenever he may turn up. But then a couple of days’ receipts added to the week’s work made an important difference to the sum total of the traveller’s orders in the course of a year, and it must not be forgotten that young Moore had resolved to excel, if possible, every other traveller on the road. One incident in his experience had shown him the necessity of never allowing the grass to grow beneath his feet. In one town that he had visited he met a rival traveller, with whom he arranged in the course of conversation to start for Liverpool on the following day. The gentleman, however, did not appear at the time appointed, and Mr. Moore proceeded on his journey alone, flattering himself that he would have all the field to himself. On arriving at his destination, he spent some time in unpacking his goods for inspection, and then sallied forth in search of customers. At the first shop at which he called he met with a sad disappointment : Mr. So-and-so had been there before him and had taken the order, and on making other calls the same story greeted his ears. He had been outwitted and forestalled ; but he was determined to turn the tables

upon his opponent. Meeting him afterwards, the rival, with a lively chuckle at his own sharpness, apologized for not keeping his appointment, and very cordially asked Mr. Moore to supper. The invitation was neither accepted nor declined : but Mr. Moore saw his opportunity and availed himself of it. The rival, knowing that he had taken the cream of the orders, and thinking that Mr. Moore would be dallying about the town in the vain hope of selling a few odd parcels, was preparing to enjoy his ease with his customers, and no doubt expected to have many a good joke with them at his friend's expense ; but, while the toast and song were passing gaily round the supper table, the pushing young Cumbrian was hard at work packing up the goods he had only opened out a few hours before, and, by dint of unflagging application during the whole night, succeeded in having everything ready for the early morning coach, took his place, got the lead of his rival in the next town (Manchester), and never afterwards lost it. A tale of the road like this loses, of course, much of its zest on being reduced to writing, but those who have had the good fortune to hear the principal figure in it relate how cleverly he succeeded in giving his rival a Roland for his Oliver could not fail to perceive that in that story was contained the great secret of his commercial success. Indeed, we believe that we are not wrong in stating that this one incident constituted in itself the great turning-point in his career. The traveller referred to was the representative of the

comparatively new house of Groucock, Copestake, and Co., then struggling into existence ; and so much was he struck with the energy and determination exhibited by Mr. Moore, and so hopeless did he consider it to struggle against such an intrepid opponent, that he soon afterwards induced his employers to try to come to some arrangement with him. Mr. Moore was offered a considerable increase of salary if he would transfer his services to the new house ; but the offer was declined. Then it was repeated in a more advantageous form, but was again refused. At length Mr. Groucock himself, seeing that if his firm was to have a chance in the great markets his irrepressible rival must be got rid of in some way, offered him as much as £500 a year if he would become their traveller. An advance of salary from £150 to £500 a year was of course a very tempting bait ; but at this time Mr. Moore knew pretty well what he was worth, and he firmly announced his decision of making no change except upon the condition of a partnership. At this proposition the firm hesitated for a time, but finding that they had no alternative but to give way, they ultimately accepted Mr. Moore's own terms ; and with an agreement under which he was to receive a fourth share of the profits during the first three years, the active young traveller became a member of the firm of Groucock, Copestake, Moore, and Co.

" At this point, then, the subject of our memoir had attained the highway that led to his subsequent eminence.

The arrangement with his partners was that he should have a fourth of the profits during the first three years, and at the end of that time if the partnership was continued he was to have an equal share—that is, a third. But in the calculations of the new partner the ‘if’ had no existence, for he felt assured that in the course of three years he could make himself so valuable an acquisition that the firm could not afford to dispense with him ; and the result fully confirmed his view. A man of lesser mark, or of feebler confidence in his own powers, might have shrunk from the task that lay before him. Here for some years he had been persuading every shopkeeper in the north that the public would be satisfied with none but Fisher’s goods : now he had to undo all his previous work, and convince them that Groucock’s were quite as good ! But the difficulty of his new position only served to display his business tact more conspicuously. He never lost his temper, and never took offence—indeed it was his maxim through life that it was bad policy to quarrel outright with any one, and he always made even an unsuccessful call upon a shopkeeper an occasion for creating, or increasing, a friendship that was always sure to end profitably in the long run. The consequence was that in these three years he took more orders for lace than had ever before been taken in the same line of business, and had so extended the connections of the firm as to establish its position in the leading ranks of commercial enterprise. Of course, the partnership was

then settled upon a permanent basis. A strong personal attachment had sprung up between the old partners and their new colleague—an attachment that ripened with years, and has extended to the surviving representatives of the original firm—and Mr. Moore, who has been the last to leave this busy world, has often been heard to say that no man could have been more fortunate in his partners than himself. One event which tended to strengthen the position of the firm was the action which they brought against a rival firm in the year 1834, and which ended in a verdict in their favour. The whole amount of the damages (£300) they at once bestowed in charity, thus at once proving the disinterestedness of proceedings that had only been undertaken with a view of establishing the soundness of their credit. Their capital was comparatively small at that time, it is true, but their pluck and energy were remarkable, and as their integrity was fully acknowledged, the sympathy of the commercial world sided entirely with them.

“ From this time their prosperity went on increasing ; and as it did so the junior partner began to urge his suit with the lady who had won his heart when he first appeared in London ; and not without success. In 1839 he married Miss Ray, and thus realized a hope that had spurred him forward for nearly fifteen years.”

JAMES WHITEHEAD, ALDERMAN AND SHERIFF OF LONDON
AND MIDDLESEX, J.P., D.L., ETC.

At the annual dinner of the Commercial Travellers' Schools the subject of my sketch alluded in graceful terms to his early connection with commercial travelling. He said : "It may be, if the Corporation should continue to exist and my health should be sustained, that in course of time I may arrive at the Civic chair. Sir, that will be a very proud distinction to me, but not a more proud boast than I am able to make that I began life as a commercial traveller ; and that all my early experience, and much of the information which enabled me to win the position I now have the honour to occupy, was gained 'on the road.'" He also observed that "if the surplus funds of the City Guilds were, as was understood, to be applied to purposes of public utility, he knew of no object of public utility which deserved the aid of these surplus funds more than the Commercial Travellers' Schools." And he further suggested that as the "simultaneous collections" had been of such great advantage to the Institution, "it would be a graceful thing to perpetuate the happy idea of their originator, Mr. William Holt, by the erection of a wing in his honour."

Listening to these sentences, and observing the calm manner and the modest demeanour under which they were spoken, I was strongly impressed by the feeling that I was in the presence of no ordinary man of business ; no everyday commercial traveller. They were



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simple and unpretentious words, but were brimful of common sense and genuine good feeling towards the fraternity to which he once belonged ; and we may infer that no matter what position Alderman and Sheriff Whitehead may eventually occupy (I know that it will be one of the highest), he is not the man to forget or disavow the more humble, though not the less honourable, one he had held in early life.

I make much of these remarks for obvious reasons, the strongest of which is, that in these days, when so many men "are not what they seem," it is a treat to hear the true ring of manly speech and the fearless though modest utterances of one who in this and other respects adorns his high office.

Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Whitehead has always recognized, both in his conversation and actions, that—

" Rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

As a traveller Mr. Whitehead had extraordinary success, the result chiefly of untiring energy, agreeable manner, and dogged perseverance. The days were never long enough for him, and I have heard him say that for many years his daily average was sixteen working hours. He commenced his career as a traveller at eighteen, going out occasionally ; and from the time he was twenty-one he was out "all the year round." From the first he far outstripped his contemporaries, and before he was yet

twenty-four I have heard that his sales in the country were more than three times those of any other traveller representing the same firm. At twenty-five he came to London to establish a business for the firm he had represented in the country, and here again his success began from his first appearance in the metropolis. Fortune always seems to have favoured him ; while in the country he never had “a balloon” but twice, and that calamity never once befell him in London ! The orders from his own pencil in town exceeded £120,000 a year ; and when he afterwards took a few assistants his sales reached between £200,000 and £300,000 per year.

Mr. Whitehead was a man whom you always felt the better for having met. He was a strong and honest opponent, with quick business perceptions ; one who always gained your confidence, and was ever true as a friend. If you were in trouble or difficulty he would, if it were in his power, be sure to help you out of it. It is seldom now that you meet a man “on the road” who possesses such qualities ; and the ruin of many a one might have been prevented by the timely advice and influence of such a friend.

These traits in Alderman Whitehead’s character singled him out long ago as one above the ordinary run of commercial men. His customers, too, had more than a passing business attachment for him. He made friends by being true to the best instincts in himself, and therefore could not be false to any one. He thus early

gained the confidence of a vast number of large buyers—a confidence which he retains to this day, many of his old customers being even now his most intimate friends.

His commercial position in the City was always a popular one; and besides being engaged, as I have previously said, in the "Bradford trade," he has been associated in the establishment and development of other large and successful mercantile concerns. He was for some time, also, proprietor of *The Citizen* newspaper, and until he sold it I have heard that he himself wrote those drastic financial articles which have given that journal its present high standing as a critic of balance-sheets.

Although he retired from active business in 1881, he still fills up some of his spare time in commercial pursuits, which he treats as a recreation rather than a labour. Amongst other occupations he has a seat on the Board of Messrs. Pawson & Co., Limited.

As a public man he is not less popular than in the commercial world. He is an ardent politician on the side of progress, and has consented to stand in the Liberal interest for the Northern (Appleby) Division of Westmoreland, his native county. Should he be successful in securing the seat, he will make an excellent representative of commercial interests in the House of Commons.

The following extract from *The Illustrated London News*, given with an excellent portrait, conveys in a

concise form his past history and present position ; and with this I conclude my brief but, to me and all commercial men, very interesting and instructive sketch.

“ Mr. Alderman Whitehead, the recently elected Senior Sheriff of London and Middlesex, is a son of the late Mr. James Whitehead, of Appleby, Westmoreland. He came to London in 1860, and from that time until his retirement in 1881 was engaged in what is known as the ‘ Bradford trade.’ In 1882, on the death of Mr. Alderman Breffit, a requisition, signed by nearly the whole of the electors of the ward of Cheap, inviting him to stand for the Aldermanic Gown, was presented to him, and he was elected without a contest. During the short time he has been connected with the Corporation, he has served on several important Committees, including City Lands, Coal, Corn and Finance, City of London School, and Library Committees. He is also a member of the Irish Society, a Governor of Queen Anne’s Bounty, Christ’s Hospital, St. Bartholomew’s, Bethlehem, Bridewell, and Emanuel Hospitals. Besides being a magistrate and one of Her Majesty’s Lieutenants for the City of London, he is a Justice of the Peace for the county of Kent, a Justice of the Peace and Deputy-Lieutenant for the county of Westmoreland. He is a member of the Devonshire and City Liberal Clubs, on the Board of Management of the Commercial Travellers’ Schools, and a trustee of the Rowland Hill Benevolent Fund for aged and distressed Post Office employés, which he was

largely instrumental in founding. He was born in 1834, and in 1860 married Mercy Matilda, fourth daughter of Mr. Thomas Hinds, of Huntingdon. Their family consists of four sons and two daughters. Mr. George Hugh Whitehead, B.A., their eldest son, obtained an exhibition at Trinity College, Oxford."



THE BEST HOTELS TO VISIT.

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Alford (Lincs.)	WHITE HORSE	<i>B. Hibbitt, Proprietor.</i>
Alfreton	GEORGE	<i>Henry Cupitt, Proprietor.</i>
Arbroath	WHITE HART	<i>T. G. Ehrlich, Proprietor.</i>
Ashford	SARACEN'S HEAD	<i>Thos. Edwards, Proprietor.</i>
Barnstaple	ROYAL and FORTESCUE	<i>N. Saxon, Proprietor.</i>
Bath	CASTLE	<i>John Rubie, Proprietor.</i>
"	FERNLEY TEMPERANCE	<i>W. L. Harrison, Proprietor.</i>
Belper	LION	<i>Francis Bennett, Proprietor.</i>
Bideford	NEW INN	<i>Henry Ascott, Proprietor.</i>
Birmingham	GREAT WESTERN	<i>J. O. Davies, Proprietor.</i>
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Bishop's Castle	CASTLE	<i>J. A. Poole.</i>
Bodmin	ROYAL	<i>A. C. Sandoe, Proprietor.</i>
Bournemouth	PEMBROKE	<i>Carr Gibbs & Son, Proprietors</i>
Bradford	BOOTHROYD'S	<i>Misses E. & R. Davies, Pros.</i>

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Bristol (Victoria St.)	ROYAL	<i>James Reynolds, Proprietor.</i>
„	ROYAL "COLLEGE GREEN"	<i>T. J. Chapman, Manager.</i>
Bury St. Edmunds	SUFFOLK	<i>M. Turner, Proprietor.</i>
Chichester	DOLPHIN	<i>— Ballard, Proprietor.</i>
Colchester	GEORGE	<i>Mrs. Guiver, Proprietress.</i>
Coleraine	CLOTHWORKERS' ARMS	<i>J. Lough, Proprietor.</i>
Dartmouth	CASTLE	<i>H. C. Collier, Proprietor.</i>
Daventry	PEACOCK	<i>W. F. Edmunds, Proprietor.</i>
Dawlish	LONDON	<i>R. Southwood, Proprietor.</i>
Deal	BLACK HORSE	<i>C. Hart, Proprietor.</i>
Diss	KING'S HEAD	<i>F. J. Burrage, Proprietor.</i>
Dover	SHAKESPEARE	<i>Arthur Haxell, Proprietor.</i>
„	ROYAL OAK	<i>R. W. Philpots, Proprietor.</i>
Eastbourne	GILANDGE	<i>H. Putton, Proprietor.</i>
East Grinstead	CROWN	<i>W. Davis, Proprietor.</i>
Edinburgh	COCKBURN	<i>Jno. Macpherson, Proprietor.</i>
„	GEORGE	<i>Henry Woore, Proprietor.</i>
Exeter	HALF MOON	<i>Thos. Gardner, Proprietor.</i>
„	ROUGEMONT	<i>T. W. Hussey, Manager.</i>
Falmouth	GREEN BANK	<i>J. H. Mitchell, Proprietor.</i>
„	ROYAL	<i>R. Carter, Proprietor.</i>
Frome	CROWN	<i>W. Brown, Proprietor.</i>

THE BEST HOTELS TO VISIT.

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Glasgow	UNION	<i>John Agg, Proprietor.</i>
"	VICTORIA	<i>Angus Mackay, Proprietor.</i>
"	WHYTE'S COMMERCIAL	<i>Robert Whyte, Proprietor.</i>
Grantham	GEORGE	<i>W. Fillingham, Proprietor.</i>
Grimsby	YARBOROUGH ARMS	<i>W. Roberts, Proprietor.</i>
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Hull (15, Jarret St.)	FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL	<i>T. Fawcett, Proprietor.</i>
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Ipswich	GOLDEN LION	<i>G. M. Cooper, Proprietor.</i>
Kettering	ROYAL	<i>T. Richardson, Proprietor.</i>
King's Lynn	CROWN	<i>George Heckford, Proprietor.</i>
"	COZENS' TEMPERANCE	<i>Mrs. C. Cozens, Proprietress.</i>
Landport (Portsmouth)	BEDFORD	<i>John Rose, Proprietor.</i>
Leeds	GOLDEN LION	<i>C. E. Brean, Proprietor.</i>
Leicester	WHITE HART	<i>Mrs. Carter, Proprietress.</i>
Lincoln	SARACEN'S HEAD	<i>L. T. Thornton, Proprietor.</i>
Liskeard	WEBB'S	<i>J. W. Clegwidden, Manager.</i>
Liverpool (Clayton Square)	" LAURENCE'S "	<i>T. D. Laurence, Proprietor.</i>
" (Mt. Pleasant)	SHAFTESBURY TEMPERANCE	<i>J. W. Lloyd, Proprietor.</i>
London (77, High Street, Boro	GEORGE	<i>Mrs. Murray, Proprietress.</i>

London (Aldersgate Street)	MANCHESTER	<i>J. Hunt, Manager.</i>
„ „	QUEEN'S	<i>Alfred Best, Proprietor.</i>
Loughborough	KING'S HEAD	<i>J. W. Greenwood, Proprietor.</i>
Louth	KING'S HEAD	<i>Nimrod Long, Proprietor.</i>
Malvern, Great	BEAUCHAMP ARMS	<i>W. G. Chapple, Proprietor.</i>
Margate	WHITE HART	<i>E. Fagg, Proprietor.</i>
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Market Rasen	WAVERLEY	<i>S. Naylor, Proprietor.</i>
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Sevenoaks	ROSE AND CROWN	<i>J. Larbey, Proprietor.</i>
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Torquay	ROYAL	<i>H. C. Bolt, Proprietor.</i>
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Truro	ROYAL	<i>R. Dobell, Proprietor.</i>
Tunbridge Wells	SWAN	<i>Mrs. C. E. Semark, Proprietress.</i>
Uxbridge	CHEQUERS	<i>W. Phillips, Proprietor.</i>
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Watford	ESSEX ARMS	<i>B. Clegg, Proprietor.</i>
Wellingborough	HIND	<i>John Wallis, Proprietor.</i>
Wellington (Somerset)	SQUIRREL	<i>T. Sharland, Proprietor.</i>
Weston super Mare RAILWAY		<i>J. R. Britton, Proprietor.</i>
Windsor	STAR AND GARTER	<i>W. J. McCloskie, Proprietor.</i>
Wisbech	ROSE AND CROWN	<i>W. Tidman, Proprietor.</i>
„	SHIP	<i>Mrs. B. Bingham, Proprietress.</i>
Wolverhampton	SWAN AND PEACOCK	<i>J. W. Carroll, Proprietor.</i>
Yarmouth	ANGEL	<i>Edward Garrett, Proprietor.</i>

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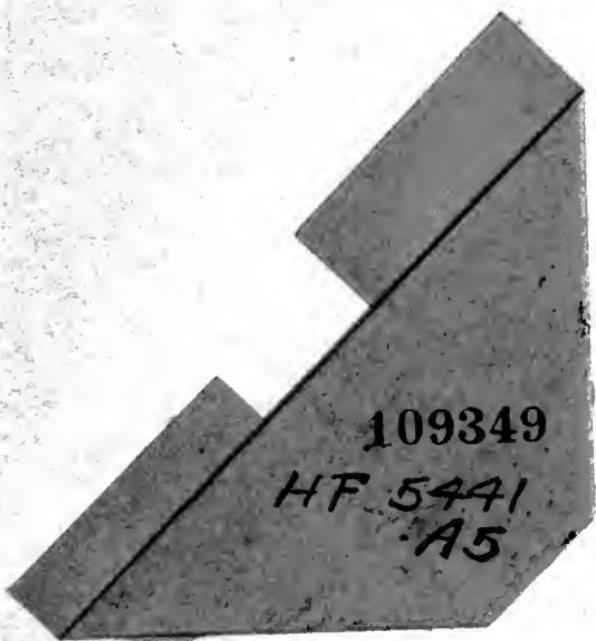
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